

THE DANUBE

WALTER JERROLD



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THE DANUBE



WEITENEGG CASTLE FROM THE WEITENBACH

THE DANUBE

BY

WALTER JERROLD

WITH THIRTY ILLUSTRATIONS BY

LOUIS WEIRTER, R.B.A.

OF WHICH TWELVE ARE IN COLOUR

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PREFACE

THE Rhine appears to have been one of the earliest of Continental "playgrounds" for British tourists—to have been such, indeed, long before Switzerland had been exploited. In the days of our grandfathers "everybody" went to the Rhine—it had become as it were the last relic of the grand tour which to earlier generations had been regarded as a necessary finishing off to every gentleman's education. The past popularity of the Rhine is emphasized by the fact that the great river was utilized by both Thackeray and Hood as scenic background for literary purposes. What the Rhine was, the greater, the more beautiful, the grander and more fascinating Danube should become in these days of improved means of communication. Probably in the past its difficulty of access made the enthusiasm of travellers less effective in attracting English visitors to the Danube. As early as 1827, J. R. Planché, poet, dramatist, and historian of costume, made a *Descent of the Danube from Ratisbon to Vienna*, and duly published an account of the journey in the following year. Twenty years later another writer, who had "scribbled successfully for the stage," John Palgrave Simpson, published *Letters from the Danube*, describing a journey by steamer from Ratisbon to

Budapest. Then, in 1853, "two briefless barristers and a Cambridge undergraduate" journeyed in a Thames rowing-boat from Kelheim to Budapest, and one of their number, R. B. Mansfield, chronicled their adventures in *The Water Lily on the Danube: being a brief account of a Pair-Oar during a voyage from Lambeth to Pesth*. Some years earlier William Beattie had gathered various legends of the Danube to accompany Bartlett's series of engravings of *The Beauties of the Danube*. Thus it will be seen that in days when the river was more distant than it is now it was not wanting panegyrists. In later years it has been curiously neglected, except in the way of casual references and the compact compilations of guide-books. This, however, may be said, so far as I have been able to ascertain, nobody who has journeyed along both the Rhine and the Danube—if we except the pardonable partiality of those who have a patriotic regard for the former—but finds the Danube almost incomparably the more variously fascinating stream.

From the time of the Romans onwards, from the time when our authentic chronicles begin, this mighty river has along its many hundreds of miles been the scene of so much history-making that to present the full story of the Danube would be to re-tell a large part of the history of the Continent during two thousand years. Such, it need scarcely be said, is not my aim or intention. To bring within the compass of a single volume some indication of the manifold beauties of the river, some hint of the romance that attaches to its castled crags, its villages, towns and cities, some suggestion of the great happenings of the past, some hint of the fascination of the present, is all that I can hope to do. And even so I am primarily concerned with presenting something of the story of the "scenic" Danube—that great stretch of the river which runs

from near Ratisbon in Bavaria to the Iron Gate between Rumania and Servia, the stretch of which, from voyaging in steamers, from tramping along the riverside roads, and from journeying along it by railway, I have a personal knowledge. In applying the word "scenic" to this greater part of the great river, it is not intended to suggest that the upper waters above Kelheim and the lower waters below the Iron Gate have not also much to offer the traveller, but the portion indicated is that which comprises the most famously picturesque parts of the Danube. It includes the beautiful mountainous stretches above and below Passau in Bavaria and Austria, where the river runs at the foot of the southern slopes of the Böhmer Wald ; it includes the wonderful Wachau of Lower Austria, and the finely varied extent of the Hungarian Danube, with the grand Kazan defile, where the river forms a natural barrier between Hungary and Servia. Along the greater part of the great extent which lies between the limits named, comfortable passenger steamers run all through the summer season, and in these steamers the traveller may continue through Rumania and Bulgaria down to the Black Sea, and all the colour and glamour of the Orient. In the upper parts of the river, before we can get afloat on it, the Danube is as it were but an incident in the scenery, but, when once we reach the parts navigable by passenger steamers, the scenery becomes the setting or framework for the mighty stream.

The fact that the Danube is known to empty itself into the Black Sea makes many people regard it as a river at so great a distance as not to come within the range of a practical holiday policy ; and if we give the Black Sea its ancient name of the Euxine, we make it seem more distant still. Yet the fact is that much of the beauty of the Upper Danube may

be explored by the holiday maker who has but a fortnight or three weeks to spend, for the river has a length of nearly two thousand miles from where it rises in the duchy of Baden to where it joins the Black Sea, crossing or bordering in its course the States of Bavaria, Würtemberg, Austria, Hungary, Servia, Rumania and Bulgaria, and touching at the northernmost of its various mouths the vast territory of the Russian Empire. In parts the river is of course familiar to many people: those who go to Vienna, for example, see one of the least attractive bits it has to show; those who go to Budapest see it at its city best; while those who go to Ulm, Ratisbon, and other Bavarian towns know it in part. But I hope to show that it is by no means the best of the river that is seen by sojourners in any of the larger towns. It is to the visitor who likes to linger in out-of-the-way places that the Danube has most to offer, and in the hundreds of miles of beauties that it has to show there is little fear of places being overrun. That a goodly number of British visitors have "discovered" the river I learned from the captain of one of the steamers, who told me that "some seasons there are many English, but as a rule more Americans." Yet the artist and I, on our journey down by boat, and on our riverside wanderings coming back, came across none of our compatriots, or of our transatlantic cousins, except in Vienna.

My thanks are due to numerous friends, known and unknown, who afforded me cordial assistance during a journey made yet more memorable by the many kindnesses shown to a travelling stranger. Special thanks, too, must be accorded to my friend Mr. James Baker, F.R.G.S., whose *John Westacott* might be described as a romance of the Danube, for it was he who first inspired me with the wish to journey down the great river, who brought home to me the fact,

which this volume seeks to enforce, that the Danube is not only an easily accessible but a well-nigh inexhaustibly delightful holiday ground.

A word or two should, perhaps, be said as to the spelling of place names adopted. Generally speaking, I have sought to use the names, and the spellings, used in the countries to which the places belong. In bilingual Hungary most places have two names, Magyar and German, in which cases I give the national name, followed by its German equivalent in parentheses. Where there are recognized English names, such as Vienna and Ratisbon, I have used these, as it would in such cases be the merest pedantry to render them Wien and Regensburg.

WALTER JERROLD



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“ The Danuby, the river sometimes of our merry passage ”

SIR HENRY WOTTON

I
THE UPPER DANUBE



THE DANUBE

CHAPTER I

FROM DONAUESCHINGEN TO DONAUWÖRTH

. . . the Hercynian forest where the boar
Roamed and the tribes withstood the swords of Rome
There springs a little stream that grown doth pour
Through mountains dark, and plains, the herdsman's home,
In swirling volume to the far Euxine Sea.

From the German

IF it cannot be said of the Danube as it was said of the Thames that it is "strong without rage, without o'erflowing full," it can certainly be said that, like the Thames, two separate places claim to be the source of the river. These two places are St. Georgen and Donaueschingen—both of them in the Duchy of Baden, both of them in the district of the Black Forest (part of the great Hercynian forest, which in the time of Cæsar stretched from the neighbourhood of Basle into the boundless regions of the north), and both of them claiming that they are situated at the very place where the mighty river starts upon its long journey. Unfortunately for the claims of the former place, the stream that runs thence to Donaueschingen is named the Brigach; and it is only when that river joins with the Breg, which also rises not far from St. Georgen, that the name Donau or Danube is used. Geographically

perhaps, the source of a river being supposed to be that one of its streams which starts at the point furthest from its mouth, St. Georgen might be entitled to the honour, but custom and sentiment have long since granted it to Donaueschingen ; and as that place embodies the river's name, it is likely long to hold the honour—even as Thames Head will continue in the view of most people to have a better title to being considered the actual source of the Thames than Seven Springs.

The rivalry has not unjustly been described by one writer as a matter of Tweedledum and Tweedledee, for when the opposing advocates seek classical support the St. Georgenites can put Tacitus into the witness box, while the Donaueschingites can subpœna Strabo. It is a pretty little quarrel, and we may leave it at that. Another point that need not trouble us over its conflict of testimony is that of the derivation of the name, though it may be noted in passing that it has been variously derived from "Donner," thunder ; from "Tanne," a fir tree ; and from Celtic words "Do Na." The last suggestion was surely put forward by an ingenious Donaueschingite, for once admit it, and the claims of St. Georgen are reduced to the ridiculous.

It is at the point where the Brigach and the Breg join that the Danube begins, and there at Donaueschingen is where our story of the river on its journey to the sea may also best begin. An old distich runs—

"Brigach und Breg
Bringen die Donau zu weg,"

which may be Englished—

"Brigach and Breg
Set the Danube on its way."

At the town in which is the "source" is a beautiful estate belonging to Prince Fürstenberg, a park which has been described as more like an English park than

any other on the Continent, and on the lake are many and various waterfowl including, says one voracious chronicler, swans which are the lineal descendants of the first ever introduced into Germany, it is supposed from Cyprus at the time of the Crusades. This is a curious statement seeing that swans are indigenous over the greater part of Europe. Museum, picture galleries and library are here, but for our present purpose the centre of interest is the spring or source, which has been enclosed, decorated with flowers and ornamented with allegorical statuary representing the Baar—the name of the parish—holding the young Danube in her arms “and whispering instructions for her journey.” Here, too, is an inscription recording the length of the river and the height of the source above the sea level—

“To the sea, 2840 kilometres” (= 1775 miles).

“Above the sea, 678 metres” (= about 2250 feet).

Steps lead down to the water, and there in accordance with an ancient custom the visitor is expected to drink of the Danube, though he is no longer expected to follow the mediæval plans either of leaping into the stream or pouring into it a cup of wine as an oblation or charm. From the source “the water, which is pure and limpid” is carried by a conduit to the Brigach, and at the point of junction the word “Donau” is inscribed—to remove any lingering doubts from the minds of those inclined to favour the St. Georgen heresy.

At Donaueschingen the ill-starred Austrian Princess Marie Antoinette, a child of fourteen, rested on her journey from Vienna to Paris—marriage and the guillotine.

Of the many hamlets, villages and small towns that the Danube passes, it will not be possible to say much, except where we pause to learn some ancient legend, some scrap of history, or to indicate things of special beauty or interest that are to be seen. In its first few

miles the course of the river takes us, as Mr. C. E. Hughes puts it, through "part of the Hegau, the land of towering, castle-crowned peaks, the land of legends and traditions innumerable ;" * through Pfohren, with its Duck Castle, so named because it was built in the water, now fallen from its castle dignity, in a field near the river, and Geissingen with its old covered bridge. Most of the way from Donaueschingen to Ulm the railway closely follows the course of the river. Next comes Immendingen—whence the railway branches south through the mountains of the volcanic Hegau which forms the dividing watershed between the Danube and the Rhine where the two rivers most nearly neighbour each other.

A few miles below Immendingen is Möhringen, where some of the water of the Danube is supposed to percolate through the earth and reappear some distance to the south as the Aach, which flows into Lake Constance and so becomes part of the Rhine. Below Möhringen is Tuttlingen at the foot of the ruin-crowned Homberg, a prosperous town, and a good centre for excursions, but as an incident on the Danube, chiefly notable for a monument forming yet one more connexion with the Rhine ; for here is to be seen a statue, erected nearly twenty years ago to Max Schneckenburger, author of the German national song *Wacht am Rhein*. Schneckenburger was born in 1819 at Thalheim, a village some miles to the west, and there he was buried thirty years later. From Tuttlingen the river follows a winding course to Mühlheim, on high ground to the right with a ruined pilgrimage church of Mariahilf beyond, and then, more tortuously still, crossed and re-crossed by the railway to Fridingen. Beuron, the next place of any importance, is notable for its monastery of Benedictines which was originally founded in the

* "The Black Forest," p. 276 (Methuen).

eleventh century by the Augustines, was suppressed at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and made over to the Benedictines about fifty years ago. On a height to the south of Beuron is a notable château, and also within easy reach of the village is a large grotto known as Peter's Cavern:

Through a narrow and beautiful valley the river goes on by wooded hills and pleasant, picturesque villages, with ruined castles now and again standing boldly on the rocky heights. Near Gutenstein are the towering rocks of Rabenfels and Heidenfels. The river, winding to and fro among the hills, is more or less closely neighboured, as has been said, by the railway; while from Tuttlingen to Sigmaringen the course of the stream may be followed by the pedestrian who has leisure—and to him alone is it given to enjoy all the beauties of this picturesque stretch of the Danube. Sigmaringen itself is a town on the right bank that affords a fine centre for exploring the river up or down-stream, and among the things of interest to be seen here is Prince Hohenzollern's Schloss, situated on a precipitous rock immediately above the Danube, with pleasant hills on the further side of the river. In the Schloss is an admirable museum and picture gallery. On the high Brenzkofer Berg, on the left side of the river, is a monument to the Hohenzollerns killed in the war of 1866 and the Franco-Prussian War and from it is to be had a good and extensive view.

After Sigmaringen is left behind the valley is less narrow, and the river goes on past small villages and old towns, each of which has no doubt its interest for the leisurely pedestrian. Beyond Reidlingen on the left bank is seen on the right the isolated hill of Bussen, from the summit of which is to be had a view embracing the whole of Upper Swabia and much of the Alps. On the hill is a pilgrimage church and a ruined castle. The ruined castles are so numerous along parts of the

river that is not possible to pause at all ; for it would appear as though in the good old times the population largely consisted of castle-dwelling barons. Zweifaltendorf has a stalactite cave ; Rechtenstein, with another ruined castle, is a notably beautiful spot ; Ober-Marchtal has a grand old Premonstratensian monastery ; while Munderkirchen, built upon a rock islanded by the forking river, has a new stone bridge with an arch span of one hundred and sixty-four feet. Beyond this the valley is wider. At the village of Ehingen, the railway turns northward from the river, which between here and Ulm receives several affluents from the south, including just before Ulm the Iller, while at Ulm itself, the river Blau comes in from a delightfully wooded and rocky valley on the left.

Ulm, the frontier town of Württemberg, is important in the story of the Danube for a variety of reasons. In the first place, it is here, fourteen hundred feet above sea-level, that the river becomes effectively navigable for flat-bottomed boats of about a hundred tons, and thus it is the centre of a brisk trade. Then it is a picturesque old city, with many ancient houses still to show, and it was long regarded as a strategic point of great importance, and, therefore, was maintained as a fortress of first rank. It was said, some years ago, that it was capable of sheltering within its fortifications a force of a hundred thousand men. Latterly, it has developed as an industrial and commercial centre, and the ramparts have been acquired by the town for peaceful purposes.

Among all that the city has to show the visitor, the ancient Gothic cathedral—the many striking features of which call for a guide-book's help and cannot be touched upon in this gossiping chronicle—stands out most prominently. “Long before reaching Ulm the old cathedral, with its massive but unfinished towers, attracts

the attention of the traveller as seen from the road, and the first view of the dark rolling Danube which is obtained before reaching Ulm, is at first sight a grand and imposing object"—thus, in dubious English, wrote a traveller arriving from Augsburg some years ago. Since that was written, the beautiful great tower on the western side with its wonderful sculptured doorway, and wealth of figures has been completed in accordance with the fifteenth-century design left by the last of the original architects. This work of completion occupied thirteen years (1877-1890) and now the tower, 528 feet in height, has the distinction of being one of the loftiest in the world—thirteen feet higher than that of Cologne cathedral and twenty-seven feet lower than the Washington Monument. From the tower is to be had an extensive view, said to take in the historic battleground of Blenheim, past which the Danube flows some thirty miles away. Writing seventy years ago, a visitor declared that if the tower could be completed, it would be one of the finest in Europe, and such it is now acknowledged to be. The cathedral itself is the second largest in the German Empire, being exceeded only by that at Cologne, and it is supposed to be capable of containing as many as thirty thousand persons.

As is fitting in a place regarded as of great military importance, Ulm figures in the annals of war. It was hence that the Elector of Bavaria set out for the famous battlefield of Blenheim some distance down the river, and it was here that the Austrian General Mack shut himself up with a force of over thirty thousand men to stay Napoleon's rapid advance on Vienna in 1805. Despite the importance of Ulm, despite the formidable army he had with him—with ample provisions and ammunition—Mack surrendered the town almost without striking a blow; "yet somehow he was suffered to escape

the punishment of which he was thought to be richly deserving."

If, thanks to the action of one man, the military annals of Ulm are thus in part inglorious, it has the distinction of remarkable association with one of the oldest of the arts of peace. It was here that the "Meistersänger" lingered longest, "preserving without text and without notes the traditional love of their craft." It is true that the Meistersänger lacked on the whole the freshness and fascination of their forerunners the "Minnesänger," but their story forms an interesting chapter in the history of the literature of their land, though a German historian of German literature has sneered at them as "chiefly burghers of towns . . . prudent though uninspired votaries of the Muse," and has declared that in their work "the real soul of Poetry was wanting." It is, however, interesting to know that for nearly five centuries there were burghers to keep the idea of poetry alive if no more, and to know that here in Ulm there remained in 1830 a dozen of the Meistersänger. Nine years later there were but four, and they in 1839 formally made over their insignia and other guild property to a modern singing society. The last formal meeting of the Meistersänger had taken place in 1770.

Ancient Ulm was on the left bank of the Danube—the old city wall along the river front affords a pleasant walk—but now it may be said to include Neu Ulm on the right bank; indeed for military purposes the two were some years ago made one, though the old town is in Württemberg and the new one in Bavaria.

It was at Elchingen, just below Ulm, that Marshal Ney won the victory that caused General Mack to surrender the city and gained for the victor, Napoleon's *brave des braves*, the grand eagle of the Legion of Honour and the title of Duke of Elchingen. Beyond the scene of the battle of October 14, 1805, the river

traverses for many miles the extensive marshlands of Donaumoos and Donauriet, closely neighbored by the railway. About fifteen miles below Ulm, picturesquely situated on the right bank on a hill overlooking the extensive Donaumoos on the further side, is Gunzburg, on the site of the old Roman station of Guntia. This place should be additionally interesting to English visitors as having long possessed a nunnery, founded here, it is supposed after a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, by an English woman named Maria Ward. Lauingen and Dillingen are small, attractive old towns. The first was the birthplace of Albertus Magnus—a celebrated scholar whom we shall meet again on our downward journey along the river—of whom a bronze statue is to be seen in the market-place.

The next places, Höchstäd and Blindheim, on the left bank, though small, loom large in history as the scenes of decisive battles. As long ago as the eleventh century two battles were fought here between the Emperor Henry IV., and the Bavarian Guelph I., when the latter was defeated and lost his dukedom. Then, in 1703, the Elector of Bavaria and Marshal Villars defeated the Austrians, and but a short interval elapsed before the Danube villages found themselves, in August, 1704, once more, thanks to the great military genius of the Duke of Marlborough, the scene of one of the "fifteen decisive battles of the world," a battle on which, according to one historian, the fate, not only of Europe, but of progressive civilization depended. The village of Blindheim or Blenheim was strongly occupied by the French, and the French-Bavarian army occupied the ground on the north to beyond the village of Lutzingen, while on the eastern side of the slight valley of the Nebel, the little stream which runs into the Danube at Blenheim, were the allies under Marlborough. It is not necessary here to tell the story. Is it not told in all the

history books, and at length in the biographies of the great commander, and in Creasy's "Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World"? It may, however, be well to recall the words in which Alison in his "Life of Marlborough" emphasizes the decisiveness of the battle.

"Had the French triumphed," he says, "the Protestants might have been driven, like the Pagan heathens of old by the sons of Pepin, beyond the Elbe; the Stuart race, and with them Romish ascendancy, might have been re-established in England; the fire lighted by Latimer and Ridley might have been extinguished in blood; and the energy breathed by religious freedom into the Anglo-Saxon race might have expired. The destinies of the world would have been changed. Europe, instead of a variety of independent states whose mutual hostility kept alive courage, while their national rivalry stimulated talent, would have sunk into the slumber attendant on universal dominion. The Colonial Empire of England would have withered away and perished, as that of Spain has done in the grasp of the Inquisition. The Anglo-Saxon race would have been arrested in its mission to overspread the earth and subdue it. The centralized despotism of the Roman Empire would have been renewed on Continental Europe; the chains of Romish tyranny, and with them the general infidelity of France before the Revolution, would have extinguished or perverted thought in the British islands." Voltaire summed up the battle of Blenheim which "dissipated for ever Louis the Fourteenth's once proud visions of almost universal conquest" in the following words: "Such was the celebrated battle which the French call the battle of Hochstet (Höchstäd), the Germans Plentheim (Blindheim), and the English Blenheim. The conquerors had about five thousand killed, and eight thousand wounded the greater part being on the side of Prince Eugene.

The French army was almost entirely destroyed: of sixty thousand men, so long victorious, there never reassembled more than twenty thousand effective. About twelve thousand killed, fourteen thousand prisoners, all the cannon, a prodigious number of colours and standards, all the tents and equipages, the general of the army, and one thousand two hundred officers of mark in the power of the conqueror, signalized that day."

Recalling the effect of the great battle we may also call to mind the passage in which Addison describes it in his poem in laudation of Marlborough:—

"The rout begins, the Gallic squadrons run
Compelled in crowds to meet the fate they shun.
Thousands of fiery steeds with wounds transfixed
Floating in gore, with their dead masters mixed,
'Midst heaps of spears and standards driv'n around,
Lie in the Danube's bloody whirlpools drowned.
Troops of bold youths, born on the distant Saone,
Or sounding borders of the rapid Rhone,
Or where the Seine her flow'ry fields divides,
Or where the Loire through winding vineyards glides,
In heaps the rolling billows sweep away,
And into Scythian seas their bloated corps convey.
From Blenheim's tow'rs the Gaul with wild affright,
Beholds the various havoc of the fight. . . .
With floods of gore that from the vanquished fell
The marshes stagnate, and the rivers swell.
Mountains of slain lie heaped upon the ground,
Or midst the roarings of the Danube drowned."

The correct periods, the conventional epithets of the author of "The Campaign" somehow leave us less moved than does the simple episode presented by a later poet, for it must have been of the little Nebel stream that Southey was thinking when he wrote his simple satire on military glory in "The Battle of Blenheim":—

THE DANUBE

" And everybody praised the Duke,
 Who this great fight did win.'
 ' But what good came of it at last ?'
 Quoth little Peterkin.
 ' Why that I cannot tell,' said he,
 ' But 'twas a famous victory.' "

The poet's " Old Kaspar " had not had the advantage of studying history in the light of Alison, and his satire has, it is to be feared, had little effect on war. Indeed, two years after the ballad was first published, further fighting was to take place in this very neighbourhood, when in 1800 Moreau cut off the Austrians' routes into Italy, and so facilitated Napoleon's Italian campaign.

At Donauwörth, on the left bank, we still have news of battle, for this old " free city " was stormed by Gustavus Adolphus in 1632 and was captured by King Ferdinand two years later, while it also played an important part in the preliminaries that led up to the battle of Blenheim, seeing that it was in this neighbourhood that Marlborough defeated the Bavarians and cut them off from their French allies.

His own account of the engagement was sent to the States-General in the following terms :

" HIGH AND MIGHTY LORDS.—

" Upon our arrival at Onderingen, on Tuesday, I understood that the Elector of Bavaria had despatched the best of the foot to guard the post of Schellenburg, where he had been casting up entrenchments for some days, because it was of great importance ; I therefore resolved to attack him there ; and marched yesterday morning by three o'clock, at the head of a detachment of six thousand foot and thirty squadrons of our troops, and three battalions of Imperial grenadiers ; whereupon the army begun their march to follow us ; but the way being very long and bad, we

could not get to the river Wertz till about noon, and 'twas full three o'clock before we could lay bridges for our troops and cannon, so that all things being ready, we attacked them about six in the evening. The attack lasted a full hour: the enemies defended themselves very vigorously, and were very strongly intrenched, but at last were obliged to retire by the valour of our men, and the good God has given us a complete victory. We have taken fifteen pieces of cannon, with all their tents and baggage. The Count D'Arco, and the other generals that commanded them, were obliged to save themselves by swimming over the Danube. I heartily wish your High Mightinesses good success from this happy beginning, which is so glorious for the arms of the allies, and from which I hope, by the assistance of heaven, we may reap many advantages. We have lost very many brave officers, and we cannot enough bewail the loss of the Sieurs Goor and Beinhelm, who were killed in the action. The Prince of Baden and General Thungen are slightly wounded; Count Stirum has received a wound across his body, but it is hoped he will recover; the Hereditary Prince of Hesse-Cassel, Count Horn, Lieutenant-General, and the Major-Generals Wood and Pallandt are also wounded. A little before the attack begun, the Baron of Moltenburg, Adjutant-General to Prince Eugene, was sent to me by his Highness, with advice that the Marshals of Villeroy and Tallard were marched to Strasburg, having promised a great reinforcement to the Elector of Bavaria, by way of the Black Forest, and I had advice, by another hand, that they designed to send him fifty battalions and sixty squadrons of their best troops. Since I was witness how much the Sieur Mortagne distinguished himself in this whole action, I could not omit doing him the justice to recommend him to your High Mightinesses to make up to him the loss of his general;

wherefore I have pitched upon him to bring this to your High Mightinesses, and to inform you of the particulars.

“MARLBOROUGH”

Donauwörth grew to be a place of such importance that it was for a time the seat of the Dukes of Upper Bavaria, until Duke Louis the Severe, who in 1256 had his wife beheaded on an unfounded charge of infidelity, removed his capital to Munich. It is suggested that the change of capital was dictated by the duke's guilty conscience. In the church attached to the suppressed Benedictine Abbey of the Holy Cross here, is to be seen the sarcophagus of the unhappy, Desdemona-like Duchess Mary. The story runs that no sooner had the deed been perpetrated than incontestable evidence of the duchess's innocence was forthcoming, and the conscience-stricken husband became grey in a single night :—

“And still that mangled form so fair
 Was present to his mind ;
 His cheek grew haggard with despair—
 No refuge could he find.
 The furrows deepened on his brow,
 All sleep forsook his eye !
 His gait so proud to earth was bowed,
 But still he could not die !
 A deadly weight, a dreary fate,
 A voice that said ‘ Live on !
 Each wretched breast may hope for rest,
 But thou canst hope for none.’”

CHAPTER II

DONAUWÖRTH TO RATISBON

“ . . . the Walhalla rises, purely white ;
Temple of Fame for all Germania's great,
A splendid beacon on a leafy height,
To hearten men below to dedicate
Their service to the service of their land.”

From the German

FROM the old capital of the old dukedom to Ingoldstadt the river for nearly forty miles finds its way through part of the Bavarian plain, another broad-stretching Donaumoos, or marshland, which has, however, been largely reclaimed and brought under cultivation. On the left bank much of the ground is higher and well wooded. Near Lechsend, which is on the left bank, the river Lechs comes in on the right—and a little way inland in the same direction is the village of Rain, where in March, 1632, the aged Bavarian General Tilly was mortally wounded in seeking to stay the triumphant progress of Gustavus Adolphus. In the following month Tilly died of his wounds at Ingoldstadt.

The village of Oberhausen on the right bank as the river nears Neuberg is associated with the memory of a remarkable “common” soldier who fell near there on June 21, 1800, and to whose memory a monument has there been erected. This was La Tour d'Auvergne—presumably a member of the family which had given France one of her most famous military leaders in

Turenne. It is said of d'Auvergne that he was "the darling of the army, the model of modern chivalry—a second Bayard." He refused to be anything more than a common soldier, being satisfied with the title granted him by Napoleon in consideration of his gallant exploits, of "first grenadier of the French army." "I am only proud," said he, "of serving my country; I care nothing for praise or honour; my reward is in the consciousness of performing my duty; but thus to be praised to my face, it hurts my feelings—that word 'consideration' will be the torment of my life." Having retired into private life during a period of peace, d'Auvergne came forward when the son of one of his old friends was drawn as a conscript, and insisted upon taking his place. Thus it came about that he took part in the fight near Oberhausen when, rushing ahead of his comrades to cut down the Austrian colour-bearer, he was surrounded by the enemy and transfixed by a lancer who attacked him from behind. "For three days the drums were covered with crape, and on the first Vendémiaire, his sword of honour was suspended in the Church of the Invalides at Paris. The forty-sixth demi-brigade from that time forward carried his heart in a silver box suspended to the colours of the regiment; and on every muster his name was recalled in these terms—Remember La Tour d'Auvergne who died on the field of honour!" A scrap of verses quoted by Dr. Beattie suggests that there existed something of another romance than that of his death.

“ ‘Nay, heed not me,’ the hero cried,
 And faintly waved his hand;
 ‘Back to the charge! till Austria’s pride
 Be prostrate on the strand!
 Cherish my fame—avenge my death;
 To-day your laurels earn!
 Glory survives the loss of breath—’
 So died the brave d’Auvergne!

The tidings flew from line to line,
His comrades wept the while,
But what was all their grief to thine
Fair Blanche of Argentueil !”

The next place of note is Neuburg, a pleasant old town situated a few miles below Oberhausen on hilly ground on the right. This was of old the capital of a small principality ; the handsome old castle rising above the varied roofs on the lower part of the bank is now partly used as a barracks, while the newer western portion erected in the early part of the sixteenth century is utilised for housing the local archives. The town is picturesquely placed, and has many antiquities of interest. Beyond lie further stretches of the Donau-moos, the next point with a history being the old and interesting town of Ingoldstadt which was at one time a place of considerable importance as the seat of a large university, founded in the latter half of the fifteenth century. At the beginning of the nineteenth the university was removed to Landshutt and some years later to Munich. There are a number of interesting old buildings in the town and in the Ober-Pfarr-Kirche (1439) are to be seen monuments to Tilly and to Dr. Johann Eck, the great controversial opponent of Martin Luther. I have seen it recorded somewhere that the Duke of Marlborough, visiting Ingoldstadt was presented with a portion of the skull of Oliver Cromwell. If the incident be true, and the relic genuine, it would seem as though the whole skull which was a few years ago much discussed as Cromwell's could scarcely have been his.

Below Ingoldstadt we have Mehring on the right bank and then on the left Vohenburg, with a large ruined castle, at one time the seat of a Margravate where the tragic marriage of Albert and Agnes, of which we shall learn more at Straubing, took place. Then

comes Pförring on the left, and Neustadt on the right. At Pförring, Kriemhilda, bound for the kingdom of the Huns and her marriage with Etzel, took leave of her brothers :

“They rode as far as Pförring upon the Danube strand
Then of the queen began they kind quittance to demand
Since homeward they returning unto the Rhine would ride ;
Nor might this without weeping ’twixt loving friends betide.”

Neustadt is a good railway centre for a beautiful and interesting stretch of the river. A little below it on the same bank is Eining, a small place at one time of great importance as having been for nearly five centuries a frontier station of the Roman Empire, under the name of Abrisina, and now worth visiting for its remains of that station. Here was the junction of the military roads which connected the Roman territory along the Danube with the Rhine and Gaul. On the opposite side of the river is Hienheim from near which starts up the steep hillside the great Limes Romanus—the wall which was built by the Emperor Probus from the Danube to the Rhine, a wall according to Gibbon nearly two hundred miles, and according to another authority nearly three hundred and fifty miles in length. Says Gibbon :

“The country which now forms the circle of Swabia, had been left desert in the age of Augustus by the emigration of its ancient inhabitants. The fertility of the soil soon attracted a new colony from the adjacent provinces of Gaul. Crowds of adventurers, of a roving temper and of desperate fortunes, occupied the doubtful possession, and acknowledged by the payment of tithes the majesty of the Empire. To protect these new subjects a line of frontier garrisons was gradually extended from the Rhine to the Danube. About the reign of Hadrian, when that mode of defence began to

be practised, these garrisons were connected and covered by a strong entrenchment of trees and palisades. In place of so rude a bulwark, the Emperor Probus constructed a stone wall of a considerable height, and strengthened it by towers at convenient distances. From the neighbourhood of Neustadt and Ratisbon on the Danube, it stretched across hills, valleys, rivers and morasses, as far as Wimpfen on the Neckar and at length terminated on the banks of the Rhine after a winding course of near two hundred miles. This barrier, uniting the two mighty streams that protected the provinces of Europe, seemed to fill up the vacant space through which the barbarians, and particularly the Allemanni, could penetrate with the greatest facility into the heart of the Empire. But the experience of the world, from China to Britain, has exposed the vain attempt of fortifying an extensive tract of country. An active enemy who can select and vary his points of attack must, in the end, discover some feeble spot, or some unguarded moment. The strength as well as the attention of the defenders is divided; and such are the blind effects of terror on the firmest troops, that a line broken in a single place is almost instantly deserted. The fate of the wall which Probus erected may confirm the general observation. Within a few years after his death, it was overthrown by the Allemanni. Its scattered ruins, universally ascribed to the power of the dæmon, now serve only to excite the wonder of the Swabian peasant."*

The remains of this great wall where it started from the Danube, known in German as the Pfahl-Graben, and sometimes as the Devil's Wall, are to be seen little more than a mile below Hienheim. From here we have for some miles a lovely bit of the Danube, with grand

* "The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," chap. xii.

forest-covered hills in the immediate neighbourhood, and the river following a winding course through them—part of the way between precipitous rocks rising ruggedly three or four hundred feet above the water. A short distance down on the right bank and close to the shore is the extensive Benedictine Monastery of Weltenburg dating from the eighth century, but turned in the middle of the nineteenth into a brewery. Dr. Beattie describes how, after some one had expatiated on the past glory of the place, a bystander said “It is written that Weltenburg shall rise again like a phoenix from its ashes; that the pilgrim shall again bow at its altar; that the abbot shall preside at its chapter; and——”

He was interrupted by a Bavarian sitting by with “Never! your abbots were mere men—sinners like others, and if they possessed any fervour, it was but the natural warmth of the grape. I have listened with much patience to what you have heard about the crusades, and so forth; but I also know a little of the history of the place; for, as ‘successor to the abbots,’ several documents have fallen into my hands, which assure me that they will never resume their old quarters; and one of the strongest reasons is, that the old cellars are empty; the old vineyard uprooted, and that our Bavarian beer is too cold for their stomachs. . . . Depend upon it, sir, if the abbots of old had restricted themselves to such virtuous potations, and been a little more chary of politics, I had not this day been the ‘brewing abbot of Weltenburg.’ These abbots, sir, were jovial fellows; most of them had worn casques in early life, and, although afterwards taking shelter under the cowl, ended with the *casque* at last. In my early days, one of their drinking songs was a special favourite at the Wirthshaus, and seems almost prophetic of the brewery that was to come. It is still a favourite.

“Brothers, life is frail as grass!

Dry clay is apt to moulder,
But moistened with a cheerful glass
Good wine's the best of solder;
Then, brothers, drink and shout the while,
Waesheil! Waesheil!

Brothers! if the journey's rough,
And needs some small concession,
To-morrow will be time enough
For penance and confession.
Meantime, we'll drink and shout the while,
Waesheil! Waesheil!

Brothers, prayer is vastly good,
So (after meals) is fasting
'Tis well to watch beside the rood;
But, while there's liquor lasting
We'll chant thro' sacristy and aisle,
Waesheil! Waesheil!”

As we near Kelheim a striking building takes the eye; this is the fine dome of the Befreiungshalle, which rises from woodland on the summit of the Michaelsberg on the rocky left bank. This grand classical edifice (the “complement” of the Walhalla which we shall see below Ratisbon) was built for Louis the First, of Bavaria. It was founded in 1842 and opened just twenty-one years later, on the fiftieth anniversary of the Battle of Leipzig. Its name, the Hall of Liberation, indicates the purpose for which it was erected—to commemorate the freeing of the country from foreign domination by the final overthrow of Napoleon. On the columned outer walls great female figures each nearly twenty feet high stand as emblems of eighteen German provinces, while within the great marble rotunda are thirty-four representations in Carrara marble of the Genius of Victory designed by Schwanthaler, between each pair being a bronze shield made from captured French guns and inscribed with the names of battles won. Other inscriptions include

the names of great generals and of captured fortresses. From the external gallery is to be had a grand view up and down this lovely bit of the Danube, over the town of Kelheim and the valley of the river Altmühl which here joins the Danube.

Between Weltenburg and Kelheim the abruptly rising rocks topped with trees that border the river have been given various names owing to their fancied resemblance to the thing from which they are named—the “Lion,” the “Bishop,” the “Crocodile,” the “Pulpit,” “Peter and Paul,” and so forth. This part of the river can only be explored by boat, which should be taken from Hienheim to Kelheim, and not in the reverse direction owing to the slowness with which boats can go up-stream. As there is no pathway by the riverside owing to the precipitous nature of much of the limestone cliffs which rise sheer from the water, the boatmen going up-stream through the Lange Wand, as the defile is named, have to pull themselves along by the aid of rings, fastened for that purpose in the rocky walls. There have not been wanting enthusiasts who describe this as the finest part of the river from its source to the Black Sea.

Kelheim, backed by the forest, is on the low land at the foot of the hill on which the Befreiungshalle stands, and at the junction of the Altmühl with the Danube. Here too the Ludwig Canal which joins the Main with the Danube, reaches the latter river, thus, as it were, enislanding the town. Kelheim is an old place with remains of an old Roman tower, a castle of the Dukes of Bavaria, now used for government offices, and other visible evidences of its one-time importance. From Kelheim to Ratisbon is about twenty miles—the railway keeps fairly close to the river for most of the distance—of pleasant scenery along the winding stream. The first half of the journey is flat, the second between

low hills. Opposite Kapfelberg with its limestone quarries on the left bank—whence was taken the stone of which Ratisbon cathedral and bridge are built—is the Teufelsfelsen. Shortly before reaching Abbach on the right is to be seen the memorial erected in 1794 to commemorate the making of the road along the river here. This memorial takes the form of a large tablet inscription on the rock face, with in front, on the bank raised upon massive pedestals, two large couchant lions carved in stone, “one looking into the river, the other apparently trying to make out the inscription.” Abbach itself is an attractive village amid greenery dominated by its slender-spired church, with the remains of an ancient castle—one of the “common objects” of a long Danube journey. This is Heinrichsburg, or King Henry’s Castle and is interesting as the birthplace of Henry the Second (canonized for his many benefactions to the Church) and as one of the seats of his splendour as King of Germany and Holy Roman Emperor. In his age the monarch turned to the consolations of religion, in expiation it is suggested in the following lines of earlier crimes :

“With guilt and grief oppressed, to soothe his pain,
The leech prescribed—but he prescribed in vain.
Then came the priest. ‘Arise,’ quoth he, ‘unshod
In pilgrim weeds approach the house of God !
There, prostrate to St. Emmeram, confess
How thou hast revelled in unrighteousness—
Denied thy heart nought that thy heart could crave !
And ask his help to snatch thee from the wave
Of heavenly wrath ! Nor grudge, if he demands
Some small accession to our Abbey lands ;
That gift alone shall purge away thy crimes,
Blessed in thy life, renowned through after times,
If for each crime one acre thou wilt pay.
‘An acre ! saidst thou ? By our lady, nay !
If thus I pay—priest ! Where were my domains !
Thy cowl, methinks, might cover what remains !’”

Oberndorf, a little distance below Abbach, is chiefly to be recalled for a tragic act of vengeance and its remarkable consequences. Hither Count Otto of Wittelsbach, who in 1208 had murdered the Emperor Philip at Bamberg, fled, and here he was overtaken and slain. The long story of the subsequent marvels may be summarized as follows. The murderer being killed, his head was cut off and thrown into the Danube, but either the river refused to accept the grisly object or Count Otto's passion, strong in death, still animated the severed head, for "refusing to sink or move down with the current, it continued to gnash its teeth, and to fix its glaring eyes on the spectators with a menacing look, which none but the 'black friar of Ebrach' could withstand." The friar, holding in his hand a black cross (which had been brought by an eagle from Calvary!) went to the river bank and addressed the floating head in the following awful words: "Dus. milabundus. Dom. infernis. presto. diabolorum!" on hearing which the head whirled round, shook its clotted locks, and sank, plump to the bottom of the river! The good people of Oberndorf fell upon their knees at the miracle, in thankfulness at having got rid of the uncomfortable spectacle. That night and the following day, however, blue flames were observed playing over the surface of the water where the head had unwillingly disappeared. The black friar of Ebrach was, however, again equal to the occasion, for he planted the black cross on the river bank opposite the manifestation, and in seven days the flames had entirely disappeared! The head having thus been finally disposed of, the body of the Count Otto was left exposed on a bare rock—thenceforward to be known as "the Murder Stone"—to pass into decay, the spot being duly respected as a haunted one:

"Where oft ye may hear the voice of death,
And oft ye may see dark Otto's form,

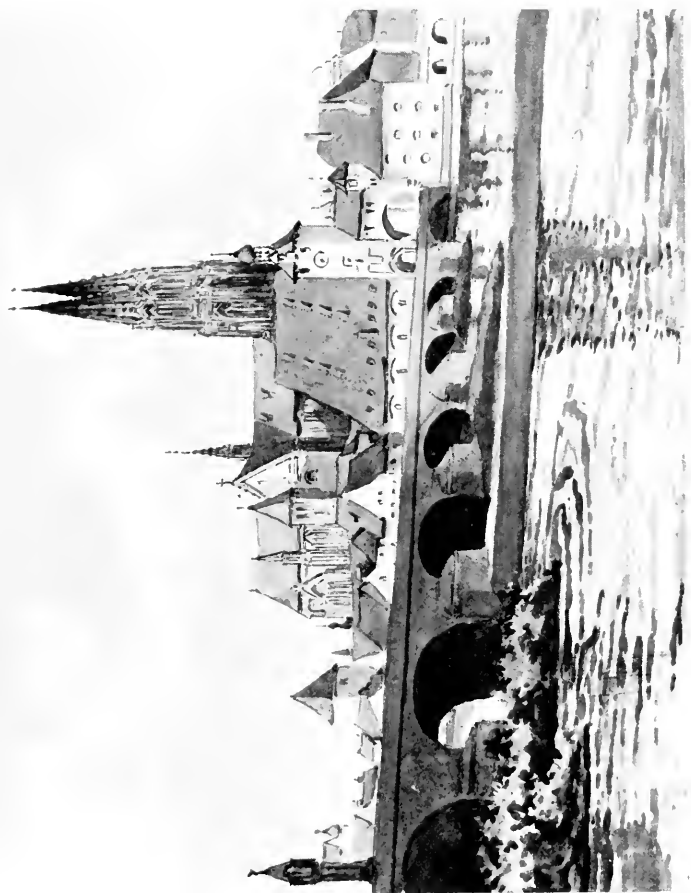
As he rides on the silver mists of the heath,
And chants a ghostly dirge in the storm."

Through a few miles of delightful and quietly picturesque scenery, the Danube winds on from this haunted spot towards Ratisbon. And as we near that city, beyond the suppressed Benedictine monastery of Prüfening, near where the railway crosses the Danube, the rapid stream passes round several small islands. Just beyond the railway bridge, the Naab comes in on the left from an attractive valley, and low hills on the same bank mark the journey round the next bend which brings us within sight of the bridges and towers of Ratisbon itself.

Most of the earlier describers of the Danube began the account of their downward journeying at Ratisbon—except the adventurous three who navigated the "Water Lily," and they joined the great river by way of the Main and Danube Canal, and so reached the latter stream at Kelheim. If we look at the general map of Europe it is easy to recognize why this should be so, and even now, probably, most tourists intending to take the passenger steamers from where they start at Passau make first for Ratisbon, and they are all well rewarded by so doing. Though it is the many old houses and towers, the twin crocketed spires of delicate openwork of the cathedral, the many nooks and corners and amazingly artistic "bits" that impress us when we wander about the town, it is here the river that claims our first attention. The wonderful "blue" river, seen as I saw it here under heavy grey skies, shows of a warm green colour—a green on the yellow side of greenness. Strauss's waltz has impressed the "blue" Danube on our minds most persistently, yet here again and again we find ourselves commenting on its greenness and even its greyness, and wondering why it should have got its reputation for blueness. Inquiry of the captain of a

Danube steamer settled the matter. "If you want to see the Danube *really* blue you must come to it in the winter," said he.

When we stand in autumn on the fine old twelfth-century stone bridge—built, says tradition, by the devil—or walk about the long islands Ober Wöhrd and Unterer Wöhrd—*islands which are really one, being connected by a narrow spit of land—it is the wonderful yellowish greenness of the rapidly swirling water that strikes us, that and the rapidity of the current which, as it is forced into narrow channels by the isletted piers of the bridge, whirls and swirls onwards, breaking into white foam. The bridge rises gradually to where, about the centre of it, there is on the western parapet the statue of the "Brückenmännchen," the "little bridge man," or naked figure of a boy seated astride a wedge of stone, and with hand shading his eyes, looking at the cathedral spires. It is an ingenious piece of statuary, for even as if one person pauses in the street and looks upwards, other passers-by will inevitably do the same, having reached this point on the bridge we almost instinctively turn to look in the direction the "Männchen" is ever looking, and doing so we get a beautiful view of the old town dominated by the beautiful spires, the Golden Tower and other high buildings rising from a grand medley of roofs, while in the foreground is the quaint old stone gateway through which we reach the bridge, close-neighbourd by a fine steep stretch of dark tiled roof, broken by its little dormers—presumably for ventilating purposes. Looking up-stream from here, we have the Ober Wöhrd, largely covered with buildings, and on the further side of it a pleasant tree-grown branch of the river with low green hills and woodlands in the distance. From the nearer of these hills, by the village of Winzer, is to be had a beautiful general view over the whole of Ratisbon.*



REGENSBURG

Looking down-stream, just below the bridge is the Unterer Wöhrd, also with many buildings on it, and a mill, the great wheel of which is seen incessantly turning with the ever hasting stream. Both up and down-stream the view is broken by an ugly iron bridge, for each of these islands is thus connected with the city. At the further end of the stone bridge is Stadthof, an old town which has suffered much in the course of the warfare of which Ratisbon has been so often the scene ; it was destroyed by the Swedes during the Thirty Years' War, and was burned down by the Austrians in 1809. It has thus nothing of special interest to show the visitor, though when the market of covered booths down the broad main street is in full swing, it is a picturesque and animated scene. Crossing the bridge one may justly recall Napoleon's words : "*Votre pont est très désavantageusement bâti pour la navigation.*"

While on the bridge it may be as well to repeat the full legend which ascribes its building to the devil. It runs that the architect of the cathedral had a particularly clever apprentice, to whom he delegated the task of erecting a stone bridge across the Danube. The young man set to work with great self-confidence, making a bet with his master that the bridge which he was about to begin would be completed before the coping-stone was laid on the cathedral which was already far advanced. The cathedral continued to grow with such rapidity that the bridge-builder began to despair about winning his bet, and to wish that he had not entered into so rash an engagement. Cursing his own slow progress he wished that the devil had the building of the bridge. No sooner were the words out of his mouth than a venerable seeming monk stood before him and offered at once to take charge of the work. "Who and what art thou?" inquired the young architect. "A poor friar," responded the other, "who in his youth having learnt something of

thy craft would gladly turn his knowledge to the advantage of his convent." "So!" said the young architect, looking at him more particularly, "I think I see a cloven hoof, and a whisking tail to boot! But no matter; since thou comest in search of employment, build me those fifteen arches before May-day, and thou shalt have a devil's fee for thy pains." "And what?" inquired the fiend. "Why," replied the young man, "as thou hast a particular affection for the souls of men, I will ensure thee the first two—male and female—that shall cross this bridge." "Say three—and done," said the devil eagerly, and throwing off his friar's habit. "Three be it," said the architect, at which the devil set readily to work. Before nightfall the spandrels were set—the stone came to hand ready hewn, the mortar ready mixed. The devil was as good as his word, and on May-day morning the bridge was completed, and the obliging fiend lay in wait under the second arch ready to pounce upon his fee. A crowd had collected to see and try the bridge, but before any one could set foot on it the cunning architect called upon them to stop, saying that in the opening of the bridge there was a solemn ceremony to be performed before it could be pronounced safe for public use. He then called to his foreman. "Let the strangers take precedence," and at his words a rough wolfdog, a cock and a hen were set at large and driven over the first arch. Instantly an awful noise was heard from beneath the bridge, and some of the people declared that they plainly heard the words, "Cheated! cheated, of my fee!" Needless to say that, after such an episode, a procession of monks and the sprinkling of holy water were necessary before the bridge could be regarded as really safe.

The bridge-builder's cunning in making use of the devil and then outwitting him, according to the legend, had yet a tragic sequel for the young architect's master,

finding himself beaten in their contest, threw himself from one of the towers of the cathedral. Should the incredulous want proof, one of the carven figures high on the edifice is said to be placed there as in the act of throwing itself down in witness to the truth of the tragedy, and, incidentally of course, also to the diabolic origin of the beautiful bridge.

Turning from the Danube itself to this most important of the towns on its banks that we have yet reached, it will be found that Ratisbon is a place full, at once of present fascination and of interesting association. The fascination can only be indicated, the associations only glanced at where the city must necessarily be compressed within the narrow limits of something less than a chapter. The buildings of this city of towers, in their variety and picturesqueness, offer an almost endless feast to the artist and the lover of old places. The magnificent cathedral, the quaint old Rathaus, the three old gateways—the Alte Kapelle, the Schotten Kirche, St. Emmeram's Abbey Church, and numerous old houses take the attention in succession, while the narrow streets, the broad market-places with their animated crowds offer much of interest. The general impression remaining in the mind after wandering about is one of endlessly varied gables, of red-tiled roofs broken by tiny dormers, square towers and twinned spires.

The markets round about the cathedral, and in the open space on which the somewhat bleak-looking Neupfarrkirche stands are lively scenes with numerous peasant women exposing, in curious boat-shaped wooden boxes, in baskets, or on outspread sheets of newspaper, their fruit, vegetables and other produce ; then, too, there are rows of stalls with umbrella-like awnings, and all the varied display of a continental market. Perhaps one of the most notable features (here, and in many other markets all along the course of the river) is the

extraordinary number of fungi, freshly gathered, and dry and wizened, which are offered for sale. The mushroom that we know—and to which in our ignorance or prejudice we limit ourselves—is not to be seen; but the variety of its congeners that are shown would delight the heart of any enthusiastic fungologist. Evidently those of the peasants who have not fruit or vegetables, eggs or fowls, butter or cream to sell, search the woods and fields for edible fungi, and from the quantity displayed, it may be assumed, find a ready sale for them in the towns.

Another market that is interesting is that at the eastern end of the Kepler Strasse, in which the fish caught in the Danube are exposed for sale, "all alive, oh." They are kept crowded together in oblong tubs and long wooden troughs like feeding troughs, so crowded indeed, and with so little of their native element, that it is surprising that they keep alive at all. The fish I noticed included pike—up to about two feet in length—barbel, and a deep fish, fifteen to eighteen inches long, with curious horny-looking scales of a large size along the back and near the gills and tail.

The Cathedral of Ratisbon—"one of the finest Gothic churches in Germany" is a grand and beautiful pile, built between the years 1275 and 1534 (the spires were added in 1859-1869); and as the architects employed upon it during the two and a half centuries that it was a-building included the Roritzers, a father and two sons, the words which Longfellow used of Strasburg Cathedral are no less appropriate here:—

"The architect

Built his great heart into these sculptured stones,
And with him toiled his children, and their lives
Were builded with his own into the walls
As offerings to God."

It was by one of the younger Roritzers, that the peculiar feature of the beautiful western front—the

triangular porch—was designed. Within the wonderfully proportioned building is much that is interesting to the student of ecclesiastical architecture. Such details, however, must be sought in the guide-books.* The small tower on the north is known as the Eselsturm or Donkey's Tower, and it is said to have had that name given it because the winding inclined plane by which it is ascended was used during the building of the cathedral for donkeys to carry up loads of material required by the builders. The tower is part of the old Romanesque edifice which the present structure superseded and it has been suggested that it was probably the belfry of the older cathedral.

The old Rathaus (Town Hall), now a kind of museum of national and municipal relics, with its high-pitched tiled roof, its flower-bedecked windows, and its ornamental doorway in the corner of the Rathausplatz attracts attention before we learn that it is not only the old-time centre of Ratisbon civil life, but was for nearly a century and a half before 1806 the meeting place of the German Imperial Diet. The wholesome admonitory inscription which those proceeding to the Diet meetings were expected to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest ran to the following effect: "Let every senator who enters this court to sit in judgment, lay aside all private affections; anger, violence, hatred, friendship and adulation! Let thy whole attention be given to the public welfare: for as thou hast been equitable or unjust in passing judgment on others, so mayst thou expect to stand acquitted or condemned before the awful tribunal of God." The wooden ceiling, sixteenth-century frescoes and old stained glass of the Diet Hall

* "Regensburg in seiner Vorzeit und Gegenwart Beschreibung der Stadt und Umgebung;" von J. Fink, gives not only a fairly full story of the things to be seen in the town, but also of the neighbourhood up to Befreiungshalle and down to Walhalla.

or Reichssaal, are noteworthy features. In the Rathaus, too, are some grand old tapestries, and—for the delectation of those who sigh over the good old times—a very chamber of horrors in the torture chamber, with its rack, “Spanish donkey,” “Jungfrauenschoss,” and such-like witnesses to past manifestations of man’s inhumanity to man. The collection of these demoniacally ingenious instruments is a particularly good one, and should suffice to impress the least imaginative with “the horrors.”

St. Emmeram’s Abbey—of which the church is the main part now left, the site of the abbey being occupied by the palace of the Prince of Thurn and Taxis—lies on the south side of the town, with one of the four remaining town gates—the Emmeramer Tor—near by. The church is still worth a visit from those interested in ecclesiastical art and architecture, in older tombs and shrines of saints; here, too, they will find the tombs of King Childeric of France and other mediæval notables. The bridge gate we have already glanced at; the other two left standing when the town wall was demolished about half a century ago are the Prebrunnthor on the west and the tall tile-roofed Osten thor. The Schottenkirche (or St. Jacob’s Church) has a fine pillared doorway chiefly remarkable for the number of quaintly carven figures of men and beasts about it. The many square towers that rise above the surrounding roofs on many of the streets are survivals, peculiar I believe to Ratisbon, of the old days when every nobleman had to be prepared to defend his house. And the story of Ratisbon suggests that such preparation was necessary, for in the course of nine hundred years the city had to withstand a siege fourteen times.

The highest of these towers, the Goldene Turm in the Wahlenstrasse, rises one hundred and seventy feet above the pavement; another is on the Haidplatz, and

yet another not far from the bridge, attached to a house on which is a gigantic mural painting of David attacking Goliath. It may well be that this subject arises from an episode in the history of Ratisbon, also made the subject of a house-wall painting. This episode was a fight between one of the citizens of the place and a giant. The story runs that in the year 930 a terrible combat was fought on the Haidplatz between a gigantic Hun, Craco by name, and Hans Dollinger, a valiant burgher of Ratisbon. The Hun had already flung forty knights out of the saddle when, in the presence of the Emperor, he was confronted by the dauntless Dollinger. The Emperor marked the champion twice over the mouth with the sign of the cross it is said, and to the virtue of the holy sign was attributed the final overthrow of the mighty pagan. Craco's sword, nearly eight feet in length, was removed some centuries later to Vienna, and Ratisbon lost a remarkable relic.

On the wall of the house adjoining the tower on the Haidplatz the inn "zum Goldenen Kreuz" is a medallion of Ludwig the First with ornate decoration, and on the wall of the tower is another medallion with twenty-four lines of verse about a certain royal romance. The inscription appears to have been painted up recently, but whether replacing an older one I cannot say. It was to the charms of one Barbara Blomberg—who is said variously to have been landlady of the Golden Cross, a washerwoman and the daughter of a well-to-do citizen, that the Emperor Charles the Fifth succumbed during one of his visits to this part of his vast dominions. The story runs that Barbara was introduced to the Emperor that her singing might lessen the melancholy from which he suffered. On 24 February, 1545 the lady bore a son—tradition says in a room in this inn—who was to become known to fame as Don John of Austria, and the victor of Lepanto. In the following year the

Emperor closed the incident by marrying Barbara to one of his courtiers, and carried off the child to be brought up as befitted his high (but for some years unacknowledged) paternal origin. Among the other features are the many fountains in street and platz, notably the one in the Moltkeplatz, and the flower-decorated one opposite the western end of the cathedral. Just west of the bridge gate is another old stone fountain dated 1610. But of these details the interesting old city has much to show to the wanderer about its byways. Another thing which strikes the visitor is the way in which the chemists' shops retain such old signs as were at one time familiar features of our London streets, but which with us only survive on inns. In Ratisbon the "Apotheken" are duly named the "Elephant," the "Lion," the "Eagle," and so on.

Mention has been made of Kepler Strasse, and it should be added that the famous astronomer, John Kepler, was doubly associated with Ratisbon. Hither he came in 1613 to appear before the Diet as the advocate of the introduction of the Gregorian Calendar into Germany—an introduction which was, however, delayed owing to anti-papal prejudice. Seventeen years later Kepler journeyed from Sagan in Silesia on horseback that he might appeal to the Diet for arrears of payment due to him. But, reaching Ratisbon, he fell ill of a fever, and died there on 15 November, 1630. We shall hear something of the astronomer again lower down the river at Linz.

In this city of many ecclesiastical foundations the very horses are said to have been taken to church in past times, though, it is true, only once a year. On St. Leonard's Day—6 November—the peasants from the surrounding country used to bring their horses, gaily bedecked, into the city and take them one at a time to peep into St. Leonard's church—"a pious precaution

which was supposed to preserve them the year round from the staggers, and, indeed, every other disorder that horseflesh is heir to."

When Lady Mary Wortley Montagu was here in 1716, she described Ratisbon as being full of "Envoys from different States," and said that it might have been a very pleasant place but for the "important *piques*, which divide the town almost into as many parties as there are families . . . the foundation of these everlasting disputes turns entirely upon rank, place, and the title of Excellency, which they all pretend to, and, what is very hard, will give it to nobody. For my part I could not forbear advising them (for the public good) to give the title of Excellency to everybody, which would include the receiving it from everybody; but the very mention of such a dishonourable peace was received with as much indignation, as Mrs. Blackaire did the motion of a reference." In some of the churches—she does not specify which—Lady Mary was shown some curious relics, for she says: "I have been to see the churches here and had the permission of touching the relics, which was never suffered in places where I was not known. I had, by this privilege, the opportunity of making an observation, which I doubt not might have been made in all the other churches, that the emeralds and rubies which they show round their relics and images are most of them false; though they tell you that many of the Crosses and Madonnas, set round with these stones, have been the gifts of Emperors and other great Princes. I don't doubt indeed but they were at first jewels of value; but the good fathers have found it convenient to apply them to other uses, and the people are just as well satisfied with pieces of glass amongst these relics. They showed me a prodigious claw set in gold, which they called the claw of a Griffin, and I could not forbear asking the Reverend Priest that

showed it whether the Griffin was a Saint. The question almost put him beside his gravity; but he answered they only kept it as a curiosity. I was much scandalized at a large silver image of the *Trinity*, where the *Father* is represented under the figure of a decrepit old man, holding in his arms the Son, fixed on the Cross, and the *Holy Ghost*, in the shape of a dove, hovering over him."

History has so much to say of Ratisbon that here we can but glance at some of the details of a place which we are told has been known by twenty different names. In Germany it is Regensburg, the town situated at the point where the Regen joins the Danube, while we still know it by its old latinized name which has been said to indicate that it was recognized as a good landing-place. This point is explained in some Latin lines quoted by Planché:—

"Inde Ratisbonæ vetus ex hoc nomen habenti
 Quod *bona* sit *ratibus*, vel quod consuevit in illa
 Ponere nauta rates."

In Roman times the town was known as Regina Castra and was probably one of the more important of the places along the frontier of Illyricum or those provinces of the Danube which, says Gibbon, were esteemed the most warlike of the empire. According to tradition it was the port at which many of the Western Crusaders commenced their voyage to the Holy Land, in evidence of which we have ballad testimony:—

"There came a bold crusader
 With fifty harnessed men,
 And he's embarked at Ratisbon
 To fight the Saracen.
 This gallant knight, Sir Gottfried hight,
 Leads forth a noble band,
 Whose flag shall wave triumphantly
 In Judah's hallowed land."

After the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, Ratisbon was by no means allowed to fall back into a centre of peace, for history tells us, as has been said, that fourteen times was it besieged during something less than a thousand years. In the Thirty Years' War its position made it a frequent storm centre, and thrice within eight years did it undergo bombardment. The wonder is that so much of the old place survives after such a record. The last of the fourteen attacks on it (21 April, 1809) is probably the best known, thanks to the mnemonic value of poetry, for it was then that the "Incident of the French Camp," of which Robert Browning wrote, is supposed to have occurred.

"You know we French stormed Ratisbon :
 A mile or so away
 On a little mound, Napoleon
 Stood on our storming day. . . .
 Out 'twixt the battery smokes there flew
 A rider, bound on bound
 Full-galloping ; nor bridle drew
 Until he reached the mound. . . .
 'Well,' cried he, 'Emperor, by God's grace
 We've got you Ratisbon !
 The Marshal's in the market place,
 And you'll be there anon
 To see your flag-bird flap his vans
 Where I, to heart's desire,
 Perched him !' The chief's eyes flashed ; his plans
 Soared up again like fire.
 The chief's eye flashed ; but presently
 Softened itself, as sheathes
 A film the mother-eagle's eye
 When her bruised eaglet breathes :
 'You're wounded !' 'Nay,' his soldier's pride
 Touched to the quick, he said :
 'I'm killed, Sire !' And his chief beside,
 Smiling the boy fell dead."

Before leaving Ratisbon it may be recalled that it was here that Richard Cœur de Lion was sent as captive

to the Emperor Henry the Sixth to be re-delivered to his captor and arch-foe Duke Leopold of Austria, who duly incarcerated him in a lonely Danube castle more than two hundred miles further down the river.

Between six and seven miles below Ratisbon is the Walhalla, a modern building which no visitor to the ancient city should fail to see. It may be reached by the river, by the road which more or less closely follows the low right bank through the little village of Barbing, or by the light railway, the Valhallabahn, which starts in one of the Stadtamhof streets, crosses the Regen and runs between the low hills and the left bank of the river. The railway goes on to the Walhalla and beyond, but the temple can easily be reached from Donaustauf, a small town at the foot of the hill, on which stand the remains of a castle of the same name—ruins which, on a suitable day, afford a grand view, and to which attaches much history, and something of mystery. Through the long street of the village with its white houses is the way to the great Temple of Fame, but before visiting it, this ruined castle cresting the bluff rock above the town should be seen.

The original castle built on this commanding point is supposed to have been founded by Bishop (afterwards Saint) Tuto, who died in 930, and whose tomb is at St. Emmeram's in Ratisbon. Whether it was founded by the saintly bishop or not, it was long used as the residence of the bishops of Regensburg, though its strength and position caused it to be coveted by lay rulers also. Henry the Proud having in 1132 taken it from the bishop of that day, the citizens of Regensburg not only besieged the castle, but actually succeeded in capturing it. It was besieged again in 1146 and yet again in 1159. It is not easy, looking across the closely cultivated plain towards Regensburg, to-day to realize the scenes of those strenuous Middle Ages. In the fourteenth century Donaustauf was

sold to Charles the Fourth of Bohemia, who maintained it as one of the barrier fortresses of his kingdom.

Of the time when the castle was the residence of the bishops of Regensburg, and should seemingly have been a centre of Christian peace and charity there are accounts that indicate that it had under some possessors quite another reputation. Here, for example, is one of the stories :

“A certain worthy Bishop of Regensburg, not contented with fleecing his flock, according to the approved and legitimate method, made it a point of conscience to waylay and plunder his beloved brethren whenever they ventured near the Castle of Donaustauf, in which he resided upon the banks of the Danube, a little below the town. In the month of November 1250,” says the chronicle, “tidings came to Donaustauf, that, on the following morning, the daughter of Duke Albert of Saxony would pass that way, with a gorgeous and gallant escort. The bait was too tempting for the prelate. He sallied out upon the glittering cortège, and seizing the princess and forty of her noblest attendants, led them captives to Donaustauf. The astonished remainder fled for redress, some to King Conrad, and others to Duke Otho, at Landshut, who immediately took arms, and carrying fire and sword into the episcopal territory, soon compelled the holy highwayman to make restitution and sue for mercy. Conrad, satisfied with his submission, forgave him ; in return for which the bishop bribed a vassal, named Conrad Hohenfels, to murder his royal namesake ; and accordingly, in the night of the 28th of December, the traitor entered the Abbey of St. Emmerams, where the king had taken up his abode, and stealing into the royal chamber, stabbed the sleeper to the heart ; then running to the gates of the city, threw them open to the bishop and his retainers, exclaiming that the king was dead.

The traitors were, however, disappointed. Frederick von Ewesheim, a devoted servant of the king, suspecting some evil, had persuaded the monarch to exchange clothes and chambers with him, and the assassin's dagger had pierced the heart, not of Conrad, but of his true and gallant officer. The bishop escaped the royal vengeance by flight; but the abbot of St. Emmeram's, who had joined the conspirators, was flung into chains; and the abbey, the houses of the chapter, and all the ecclesiastical residences, were plundered by the king's soldiery. The Pope, as might be expected, sided with the bishop and excommunicated Conrad and Otho; but the murderer, Hohenfels, after having for some time eluded justice, was killed by a thunderbolt!"

Another prelate who resided here is reputed to have had the enviable power of being in two places at once. This was no less a personage than Albertus Magnus, who succeeded the highwayman-bishop in the episcopate of Ratisbon. According to the chronicles, Albertus was able, while delivering his lectures in the Dominican Chapel in Regensburg itself, also to be closely engaged in study in his palace at Donaustauf, some miles away. A case surely in which even the system of pluralism would have been thoroughly justified.

Coming down from the peaceful ruins to the village again, we may take one of two ways to the Walhalla, going straight on to the east where the front of the giant Grecian temple is seen above the trees on the brow of the hill to the left, and climbing the many steps to the front; or taking the left turning where the road forks, and going past the little hillside church of St. Salvator—built, it is said, in expiation of the sacrilegious crime of some soldiers, who dishonoured the Host—through woodland paths reach the western columned side of the great edifice, and come more or less suddenly on what is, if the weather



THE WAIHEKE



be clear, a grand "surprise" view. Behind us the oak woodland, in front the magnificent Parthenon-like white building, standing on the brow of the hill—

"A sumptuous frontispiece appeared
On Doric pillars of white marble reared."

And to the right, green and turf and a view across the Bavarian plain. On a fine day the view is one to arrest the attention, while the grand building with its columned exterior is so satisfying to the eye, that we may well feel inclined to linger about before entering the great hall. Approaching from the back, we pass under the arcade of columns to the front, where massy tiers of steps lead down the hill to the river.

From the front here is a magnificent view if kindly weather prevails—its extent could be gauged even on such a grey wet day as that on which I visited it. The building stands three hundred and fifteen feet above the river—not in itself a great height—but the southern bank is the beginning of a great far-stretching plain, and it is said that, in the most favourable climatic conditions (which so rarely obtain in such cases) the distant Alps can be seen. Even if it fall short of that, the view is sufficiently extensive across the plain, back to Ratisbon and down the winding stream, island-divided, towards Straubing.

Before entering this Temple of Fame—more impressive than that imagined by Pope—it may be mentioned that the building was founded for the purpose which its name sufficiently attests, by Ludwig the First of Bavaria, owing to the great pleasure which he had had when studying at Jena in the society of Goethe. It is said that he then declared that if he ever succeeded to the throne he would erect a building which should serve as a Temple of Fame for the whole of Germany. Nobly did he fulfil that promise. The

architect was Leo von Klenze ; the first stone was laid on October 18, by King Ludwig ; and on the same date, twelve years later, the temple was solemnly dedicated by his Majesty, who said : “ May the Walhalla contribute to extend and consolidate the feelings of German nationality. May all Germans of every race henceforth feel they have a common country of which they may be proud, and let each individual labour according to his faculties to promote its glory.” It had cost about two hundred thousand pounds, and thus honouring the great men of the German lands, the Bavarian king gained lasting honour for himself, for the building is one as perfect in taste as it is in form, to use the words of an early visitor. It is true that there have not been wanting critics who have objected to the incongruity of building a temple after a Greek plan to the honour of great Teutons and then naming it the Walhalla, but the objection is really an unimportant one, and we may well be satisfied with having a beautiful edifice dedicated to a beautiful purpose : we may remind the critics, too, that “ the Doric order was peculiarly sacred to heroes and worthies.” Entering, we find ourselves in a grand and impressive hall :

“ Here fabled Chiefs, in darker ages born,
Or Worthies old, whom arms or arts adorn,
Who cities raised, or tamed a monstrous race ;
The walls in venerable order grace :
Heroes in animated marble frown,
And Legislators seem to think in stone !”

The interior is a magnificent hall—of nearly the same dimensions as the Parthenon—with walls of ruddy-tinted marble ; the floor of marble mosaic ; the roof, brilliant blue and star-spangled, strikes a note a little out of keeping with the general severity of the rest. There are sculptured Victories and Valkyries, and a frieze representing, in sculptured relief by Martin Wagner,

something of the history of the German race before the coming of Christianity, while high around the walls are a series of marble tablets bearing the names of those worthy a place in the Temple of German Fame, but of whom no authentic portraits have come down to us. Indeed, even those of great achievement, whose names have not come down to us are not forgotten, for three of these tablets commemorate the author of the "Nibelungen Lied," and the builder of Cologne cathedral. Other tablets serve to remind us that Tennyson but stated a truth when in compliment to Queen Alexandra he said, "Saxon, Norman and Dane are we," for here among the heroes of the Germanic Temple of Fame, we shall find the names of King Egbert, of Alfred the Great, of Hengist and Horsa, even that of the Venerable Bede. At the further end of the hall is a seated statue of King Ludwig, and ranged along the walls are more than a hundred busts, many of them very fine examples of modern sculpture. The latest addition, Von Moltke (added in 1909), is particularly good. The bust of Bismarck, which was placed in Walhalla in 1908, on the sixty-sixth anniversary of the opening, is also admirable. There is about the whole so much excellence as to suggest that the Temple in addition to fostering national feeling should prove an encouragement of the sculptor's art, for next to the honour of winning a place in the Walhalla must be the distinction of contributing to the work there permanently placed.

From the programme which I picked up in the "oaken wood" at the back of the building two years after the event, we may gather from the ceremonies at a students' "homage" paid to Bismarck here, a few days after the bust was placed in position, some idea of the ceremony, which presumably attends the dedication of a new entrant among the "Walhalla comrades." The programme runs as follows :

THE DANUBE

HOMAGE

Of the Society of German students before the bust of
 PRINCE BISMARCK
 in the Walhalla
 on the 7th November, 1908, at 4 in the afternoon.

PROGRAMME

Coronation March from the Opera, "Die Folkunger,"
 by F. Kretschmar, for string quintet and harp.
 Entry of the Deputation.
 The "Bismarck Hymn," written by Dr. Raimund Geister,
 composed by Georg Meyer.
 Sung by the "Regensburger Liederkranz" under the leadership of
 their choirmaster Herr G. Meyer.

DEDICATORY ADDRESS

delivered by Professor Sponsel, President of the Union of all
 Student Societies.
 "Keep watch, it's nearly day," from "The Meistersinger of
 Nuremberg" by Richard Wagner, for string quintet and harp.
 Exit of the Deputation.

The music by the Band of the Royal Bavarian 11th Regiment
 under the direction of the Conductor, Herr Kleiber. Harp:
 Fraulein Langhammer of the Municipal Theatre Orchestra.

THE BISMARCK HYMN *

Written by DR. RAIMUND GEISTER, composed by
 GEORG MEYER.

The German Temple of Honour stands
 On a mountain by the Danube.
 Those who high from 'mid, the German people rise
 Dwell there within that dome.
 It was built by the Royal architect
 Who with oak bordered it round—
 The honoured German king who yonder
 Among his comrades dreams.

* The translation gives no more than a rough rendering to the
 meaning of the verses.

Walhalla's comrades, hear ye not
Sounds from among the oaken wood ?
Triumphant through the mist cloud breaks
The golden sunshine.
With heavy step a hero draws near.
It thrills my very blood
Where is in Germany a man
In high spirit resembling him ?

Comrades, what you yourselves look for
The Norns to us deny,
What I in my young breast conceived—
Bismarck, thou hast dared :
An united people, an united Empire,
The deed is colossal !
Bismarck that was young Siegfried's stroke.
Hail to thee, Walhalla comrade !”

Later the company joined in singing the national song, “Deutschland, Deutschland, über Alles.”

Before turning from the beautiful temple of honour, the statuary groups on the northern and southern peditments should be examined. That on the north end represents Armin (or Herman) with his Germans fighting the Romans, while that on the south, symbolizing the regaining of German liberty after the battle of Leipzig in 1813, shows “Germania” seated and attended by male and female figures representing the Germanic states and the rivers Rhine and Moselle.

Beautiful as is the view from the front of the Walhalla, it must be said that the place is more impressive if approached from the back than by the great flights of massy stone steps which occupy a goodly part of the hillside from the front. The extent and arrangement of these in alternate twin flights, now bifurcating and now meeting, detract somewhat from the impressiveness of the whole as seen from the river front. But the whole thing represents a grand idea grandly realized, and it is easy to believe that from whatever part of the

German empire visitors come, they realize here the unity of their race and the greatness of their destiny. To render boldly a few anonymous lines quoted in the "Beschreibung der Walhalla"—the little souvenir guide to be bought there—

Germania's furthest sons,
Your valiant fathers yearn
That the blood in your veins
May mount higher, quicker flow,
When the sound of joyous singing
Mightily at Walhall's ringing.

CHAPTER III

RATISBON TO PASSAU

“ On one side far the fruitful plain extends ;
The other's wooded steeps,
Around the base of which in sinuous bends
The Danube grandly sweeps.”

From the German

FROM the Walhalla we have a glimpse of the kind of country through which for many miles the Danube winds its tortuous length. On the left bank are generally the lower hills of the Bayerischer Wald, though for a part of the way these recede to some distance ; on the right, “low sedgy and Dutch like,” is an almost unbroken plain extending far to the south. This plain is now well cultivated, and here and there is broken by groups of farm buildings, by small villages consisting frequently of but a few houses (many of them with wooden balconies like those of typical chalets) dominated by white churches, the warm red minaret-like steeples of which—“Little Kremlin-looking cupolas” one visitor has termed them—form a notable feature in the landscape. On this plain we have great stretches of various crops merging the one into the other without any hedges or other division. Cattle may be seen ploughing the fields, and perchance a man sauntering along a road driving a couple of pigs—a cord from the right hind leg of one to the left hind leg of the other, each thus checking the other's wanderings.

Along the ever-winding river on either bank are occasional villages, but there is no place of special interest for some distance along the stream, which here and there almost doubles upon itself, and here and there receives the water of some small tributary. At Wörth, on the left bank—to which point the Walhalla railway runs—used to be a palace of the bishops of Ratisbon, later a residence of the Princes of Thurn and Taxis. Beyond Wörth the country on the left also becomes flat.

The great plain of Bavaria is known as the Dunkelboden (dark soil) and also as the granary of Bavaria, from the nature of its rich cultivable earth. It is suggested that this was once a great morass—it may perhaps be the bed of some ancient lake. In the days when education was a luxury reserved for the few, the words Bauern von Dunkelboden, or peasants of the dark soil, were used as a term synonymous with boor. Sossau, a village on the left bank as we approach Straubing, is chiefly remarkable for a miracle that is supposed to have happened in the year 1534, when a picture of the Virgin was brought thither by angels. The story runs that the picture was originally in another church in a village where the Lutheran doctrine had been adopted, and that angels took it by boat up the Danube and deposited it at Sossau as a more orthodox place. Sossau belonged to the monks of Kloster Windberg, and they were duly authorized to publish an account of the miracle, and for the benefit of those who could not read a pictorial representation of the transporting of the picture was duly painted on the walls of their monastery at Straubing.

Straubing is an interesting old place on the right bank of a right arm of the Danube, which some distance before reaching the town forks round a large island. It is said of the people that they “ploughed the

Danube," because they dammed up the old bed of the river and so diverted the stream so that it should flow directly by their walls—in proof of which the town arms are decorated with a plough. It is, as has been said, an old town—it has indeed been identified by some historians as *Castra Augustana* one of the many Danubian stations of the Romans. There are a number of picturesque old buildings, including the tall quadrangular turreted Town Tower, erected early in the fourteenth century. The Gothic churches have notable monuments and stained glass, and in the graveyard of St. Peter's on the high bank to the east is a chapel to which a romantic and tragical story belongs. This is the Agnes Bernauer Chapel, the name of which is that of a girl who loved too well but not wisely, seeing that she was of humble origin and her lover was heir to the Dukedom of Bavaria. The story may be borrowed from Planché who declared that he doted upon old stories.

"Albert, the only son of Duke Ernst of Bavaria, was one of the most accomplished and valiant princes of the age he lived in. His father and family had selected for his bride the young Countess Elizabeth of Würtemberg. The contract was signed and the marriage on the point of taking place, when the lady suddenly eloped with a more favoured lover—John, Count of Werdenberg. The tidings were brought to Albert at Augsburg, where he was attending a grand tournament given in honour of the approaching nuptials; but they fell unheeded on his ear, as his heart, which had not been consulted in the choice of his bride, had just yielded itself, 'rescue or no rescue,' to the bright eyes of a young maiden whom he had distinguished from the crowd of beauties that graced the lists. Virtuous as she was lovely, Agnes Bernauer, had obtained amongst the citizens of Augsburg, the appellation of 'the angel';

but she was the daughter of a bather, an employment considered at that period, in Germany, as particularly dishonourable. Regardless of consequences, however, he divulged his passion, and their marriage was shortly afterwards privately celebrated in Albert's castle at Vohberg. Their happiness was doomed to be of short duration. Duke Ernst became possessed of their secret, and the anger of the whole house of Munich burst upon the heads of the devoted couple. Albert was commanded to sign a divorce from Agnes, and prepare immediately to marry Ann, daughter of Duke Erich of Brunswick. The indignant prince refused to obey, and being afterwards denied admission to a tournament at Regensburg, on the plea of his having contracted a dishonourable alliance, he rode boldly into the lists upon the Heide Platz, before the whole company declared Agnes his lawful wife and duchess, and conducted her to his palace at Straubing, attended as became her rank. Every species of malice and misrepresentation was now set at work to ruin the unfortunate Agnes. Albert's uncle, Duke Wilhelm, who was the only one of the family, inclined to protect her, had a sickly child, and she was accused of having administered poison to it. But the duke detected the falsehood and became more firmly her friend. Death too soon deprived her of this noble protector, and the fate of the poor duchess was immediately sealed. Taking advantage of Albert's absence from Straubing, the authorities of the place arrested her on some frivolous pretext, and the honest indignation with which she asserted her innocence was tortured into treason by her malignant judges. She was condemned to die, and on Wednesday, 12 October, 1436, was thrown over the bridge into the Danube, amidst the lamentations of the populace. Having succeeded in freeing one foot from the bonds which surrounded her, the poor victim, shrieking for help and mercy,

endeavoured to reach the bank by swimming, and had nearly effected a landing, when a barbarian in office, with a hooked pole, caught her by her long fair hair, and dragging her back into the stream, kept her under water until the cruel tragedy was completed. The fury and despair of Albert on receiving these horrid tidings were boundless. He flew to his father's bitterest enemy, Louis the Bearded, at Ingolstadt, and returned at the head of a hostile army to his native land, breathing vengeance against the murderers of his beloved wife. The old duke, sorely pressed by the arms of his injured son, and tormented by the stings of conscience, implored the mediation of the Emperor Sigismund, who succeeded after some time in pacifying Albert, and reconciling him to his father, who, as a proof of his repentance, instituted a perpetual mass for the soul of the martyred Agnes Bernauer."

The bridge from which this terrible tragedy—one of the most terrible of the many recorded in the annals of the Danube—took place no longer exists. The date 1436 on the tomb of the murdered Agnes is supposed to be an error, as her husband married Ann of Brunswick in that year. The present bridge connecting the island with the town is of later date. The island, known as Donauwiese (or Danube Meadow) was at one time the annual scene of an eight-day's fair—known as the Sossau Fair—beginning on the Sunday after Michaelmas. The good folk of Straubing do not seem in the Middle Ages to have been particularly intelligent, for about forty years before the tragedy just chronicled the town was destroyed by fire, and as this originated in a joiner's shop, no joiner was permitted to reside in the place afterwards; and this regulation was maintained for about a century and a half! The wisdom shown seems to have been similar to that of the Hamelin folk, who would listen to no itinerant musicians after the Pied

Piper had (in consequence of their own municipal meanness) spirited away their children.

Like so many other towns that we shall have to visit, Straubing had to bear the brunt of much fighting in the olden times. In 1332 it was besieged for about six weeks by the Bavarians (having been taken by the Austrians about a dozen years earlier) before being captured. In 1663 it had again to stand a severe siege when attacked by the Duke of Saxe-Weimar; and on that occasion the burgomaster of the town, a noted marksman, himself shot upwards of thirty of the duke's best officers. In 1704 it was again taken by the Austrians. Possibly the reputation of Burgomaster Höller's marksmanship saved the place from being one of the scenes of fighting in the Napoleonic wars. The Gothic castle—long since converted into barracks—was built in 1356 by Duke William of Bavaria who had married an English princess. On the south side of the castle is a portrait-memorial to a distinguished native of Straubing, Joséph von Fraunhofer (1787-1826) a celebrated optician. Fraunhofer, the son of a poor glazier, being left an orphan when young, was apprenticed to a glass polisher, and when fourteen years of age nearly lost his life, but the accident was indirectly the means which led him to success. On 21 July, 1801 the house in which he was lodging fell down and, fortunately for the poor lad, at the moment that he was being extricated from the ruins, the Elector Maximilian Joseph happened to be passing, and salved his wounds with a present of money which enabled him to obtain release from the last few months of his apprenticeship and to purchase a glass-polishing machine for himself, and so to start upon a distinguished career of study and invention.

North-east of Straubing—in which general direction the devious river flows for some distance—is to be seen the pyramidal Bogenberg about half a dozen miles

away. Before reaching it, however, the river receives some further of the many small tributaries that flow down from the Wald, and passes several pleasant, but not otherwise remarkable villages, notably, where the little Aitrach comes in from the south, the triplet-village of Unter-, Mittel-, and Ober-Öbling. The beautiful hills are here again closer to the river on the left, while the plain on the right becomes more diversified. The first place of interest is found shortly before the point at which the railway from Straubing crosses the Danube to Bogen, where on the left stand the conspicuous buildings of the ancient Benedictine monastery of Ober-Altaich. So many were the Benedictine establishments along this river that Schultes, in his "Handbuch für Reisende auf der Donau," published nearly a century ago, coming to describe one of them wrote: "'So soon another!' I think I hear the traveller and the reader exclaim, who may not be acquainted with the magnitude of this Order." And he then goes on to summarize thus, in a way to delight those with a taste for statistical tit-bits, the number of notables who had belonged to the Benedictine Order up to the time of Hemmauer: "Sixty-three popes, two hundred and twenty-three cardinals, two hundred and fifty-five patriarchs, sixteen thousand archbishops, forty-six thousand bishops, twenty-one emperors, twenty-five empresses, forty-eight kings, fifty-four queens, one hundred and forty-six imperial and royal children, and four hundred and forty-five sovereign princes and dukes."

The "Kloster" of Ober-Altaich was first founded in the eighth century by a duke who brought Benedictines from Reichenau to people it, and it was built where a chapel had been erected earlier by "the Holy Parminius." Here, still earlier, had stood a Druidical altar, and Parminius, having destroyed it and with his own hands cut down its sheltering oak, built the chapel which was

succeeded by the first Kloster. That was destroyed by the Hungarians in 907, and a couple of centuries passed before it was rebuilt by the Count of Bogen and started on a long period of continuous prosperity. When the Thirty Years' War was devastating so much of the Continent, Ober-Altaich was not spared, for in 1634 it was destroyed by the Swedes, only to rise, phoenix-like, more splendid than before, thanks to the wealth possessed by the monks. The fresco-paintings in the monastery church illustrate the old-time feeling against Lutheranism, for "monks are drawn exorcising Straubing, and Luther is seen running away in the shape of an unclean spirit, riding on a hog, with the Bible under his arm, a sausage in one hand, and a beer glass in the other."

Beyond the railway bridge is seen the Bogenberg at the foot of which is the pleasant village of Bogen. On the top of the 'berg is an old pilgrimage church, erected in consequence of one of the various miracles that belong to the neighbourhood, and the ruins of a castle, at one time the seat of one of those robber-nobles who must have made travelling in these parts a terrible thing in the olden days. To Sossau we have seen—and with the particularity of a date not often attached to such happenings—a picture was brought by angels; to Bogen there floated, upstream, on the waters of the Danube a hollow stone image of the Virgin. Here it grounded, and the hill-top chapel was duly built to house it, and in course of time became famous as a pilgrimage church. Sometimes, it is recorded, as many as eight thousand pilgrims at a time have journeyed to Our Lady of Bogen. Owing to its exposed position—the hill-top is nearly four hundred feet above the river—the church has often been damaged by storm, and once when it was crowded with pilgrims. This was on Whit Tuesday, 1618, when the tower was struck by

lightning, and the congregation, in the panic that ensued, crushed several of their number to death. Æmilius Hemmauer, a prior of Ober-Altaich, who recorded the tragedy in verse, describes how—

“In one thousand six hundred and eighteen,
On the third day of Whitsun near midnight.”

when the church was closely crowded the tower was struck and fell in ; two people were killed outright, and in the subsequent struggle—

“The great force crushed without sparing
Four men and ten women,
There lay ye in two graves, dead,
Three men, seven women ; console ye, God.”

The account is not very explicit ; presumably one of the men and three of the women recovered.

The ruins of the castle which once proudly dominated the hill-top speak of a past when the lords of Bogen were possessors of the country north of the Danube from the Regen to the Ilz and far up into Bohemia ; when they were welcomed as allies, and feared as enemies, by the monarchs of near-by principalities. In the Middle Ages there seem to have been periods of terrible lawlessness in the various German states, and the nobles whose castled homes were perched on the crags bordering the great rivers, the Rhine and the Danube, appear to have been some of the most lawless people of the time. “The terms noble and robber were synonymous, and the higher the rank the more lawless and rapacious were the deeds of the titled ruffian. The castle of Bogen was admirably adapted for a bandit's hold. Seated upon the apex of a pyramidal rock, inaccessible but by one narrow pass on its eastern side, which a handful of determined men might keep against a host, and commanding a view over nearly half the dukedom of Bavaria, its lawless lord watched from its

battlements, like a vulture, the approach of his unsuspecting prey, and, pouncing upon it, bore it up in triumph to his mountain aerie, where he feasted at his leisure in security." The miraculous arrival of the stone figure of the Virgin at Bogen made the Count of that day repent somewhat of his evil ways and, possibly on receiving a hint as to the best way of cancelling some of his sins, presented this castle on the Bogenberg to the monks of Ober-Altaich; having done what they would on the earth, it may have appeared prudent to seek to ensure a comfortable reception in heaven.

The Counts of Bogen seem to have married women well fitted to be their mates, if we may judge by the story that is told of the mother of the last of these nobles—the family became extinct about the middle of the thirteenth century. This lady was Ludmilla, a Bohemian princess, who had married Count Albert the Third of Bogen. After the death of her husband, Duke Louis the Second of Bavaria heard so much about Ludmilla that he offered her marriage, but, like a shrewd man, knowing the unverity of Rumour, and her sister Report, he made the offer conditional upon his liking her when they became personally acquainted. In other words he expressed a desire to meet the Countess "with a view to matrimony." The lady agreed to the terms, and duly received her ducal visitor and prospective suitor. Doubtful as to the impression that she had really made upon him, and suspicious of the sincerity of her wooer, she one day, in seeming playfulness, suggested that they should plight their troth in the tapestried chamber in which they happened to be, and that the three knights figured in the tapestry might be regarded as witnesses. The Duke, unsuspecting any trick, humoured the apparently playful widow, and took the oath required of him—and on the instant three living knights stepped out from behind the hangings,

and compelled him to ratify his pledge! Had Duke Louis but suspected that there was a "a rat i' the arras," the story might have had another ending.

A little beyond Bogen the Danube trends in a southerly direction, and once more the hills of the Wald recede for a time, though after a few miles the stream turns again towards the mountains, the wooded heights of which are never many miles away from the left bank. Among the villages along the banks, Wischelburg is worthy of mention as being the modern representative of the Roman Bisonium destroyed by Attila and his Huns. As the river nears Deggendorf, there is on the right bank the Natternberg, an isolated hill nearly three hundred feet above the river, and notable as the first hill of any size that has broken the plain for many miles—eighty, says one stickler for the definite—on that side of the river. The great mass of granite certainly seems to belong more fittingly to the north side, and if geologists fail to explain its state of splendid isolation on the south, folk-lore is more resourceful. The legend runs that the devil, having a grudge against the too-good people of Deggendorf, brought this little hill all the way from Italy for the purpose of destroying the town. Having reached the south side of the Danube with his burden, he heard the ringing of the Ave Maria bell at the monastery on the other side of the river, and so was compelled to drop it just short of the mark.* On the top of the Natternberg are the ruins of an old castle, never restored after its destruction by the triumphing Swedes during the Thirty Years' War.

* A similar story belongs to Kent, for it is said that the devil, wishing to destroy the city of Canterbury, took a great part of it up intending to drop it in the sea, but just as he reached the shore, he heard the ringing of the cathedral bell, and had to drop his load, and so instead of destroying the city of Canterbury, he started the town of Whitstable.

Another similar legend of this part of the Danube concerns a large flotilla carrying crusaders towards the Holy Land, a sight which so enraged the devil "that he plucked up rocks from the neighbouring cliffs, and pitched them right into the channel of the river, thereby hoping to arrest their progress. But in this he was completely deceived; for after the first rock came plunging down amongst them, every man made the sign of the cross, and uniting their voices in a holy anthem, the fiend was instantly paralysed, and slunk away without further resistance. So huge, however, was the first stone which he threw, that for ages it caused a swirl and swell in this part of the river, which nothing but the skill and perseverance of Bavarian engineers could remove."

At the riverside foot of the Natternberg, is the village of Fischerdorf, and across the stream, beautifully situated, is Deggendorf, backed, as it were, by terraced hills, each semicircle rising higher than that in front. These mountains of the Bayerischer Wald, which rise at their highest to nearly five thousand feet, are still largely covered with forests in which pine and beech are the preponderating trees.

Kloster-Metten, the ringing of the bells at which caused the devil to drop the Natternberg, and so saved Deggendorf from destruction, is on the left bank where the Unternbach joins the Danube. The monastery owes its origin, says legendary lore, to the following series of strange occurrences. A herdsman, belonging to the village of Michaelbuch, Gamelbert by name, having been sleeping for some time under a tree, awakened to find that a book was lying on his breast. This book was written in English, of which language the simple herdsman was, of course, wholly ignorant, but, nevertheless, he at once began reading it, and, reading it, was so greatly edified, that abandoning his simple labour as

herdsman, he journeyed to Rome and became a priest. On his way he baptized a boy named Utto, desiring that when he became a man the lad should seek him out. This in due time Utto did, when Gamelbert made him priest of Michaelbuch; but Utto did not care for his new task, and so, deserting his flock, he crossed the river and wandered into the woods, and there—close to a spring since known as Utto's spring—built a hermitage which he dedicated to the Archangel Michael.

It came to pass that the mighty Emperor Charlemagne hunting in the neighbourhood discovered the holy hermit engaged in the curious whim of hanging his axe upon a sunbeam! Astonished greatly by what he saw, and recognizing in it proof of Utto's holiness, the emperor offered to grant the hermit any request that he might prefer. Utto asked that a convent might be built, and Kloster-Metten was in due course erected in fulfilment of Charlemagne's promise. Those who are inclined to be sceptical can see the monastery, can visit the spring and the little church of Uttobrunn near by! If these do not persuade them of the truth of the legend, they will, at least, readily admit that the beautiful wooded hills hereabouts, and the delightful mountain streams, form an appropriate setting for the mediæval story.

Deggendorf has the usual tale to tell of suffering during wars, indeed it suffered more than some of its neighbours, for not only was it partly destroyed by the Swedes, but much of what the enemy spared fire destroyed a few years later—including all the town records. But some good old buildings, including the Rathaus and a fourteenth-century pilgrimage church escaped destruction. This church is said to date from the year 1337, when a woman and some Jews were concerned in stealing and insulting the Host. Their efforts to destroy the consecrated wafer, by eating, by hammering on an anvil, and other means were

miraculously frustrated; and when they flung it down a well, the well was immediately surrounded by a nimbus. However the story arose, the fanatical passions of the populace were aroused against the Jews, and a horrible indiscriminate massacre of those people took place, after which the miraculously preserved wafer was solemnly taken back to the church from which it had been stolen. The massacre took place on the day after that dedicated to St. Michael and a century and a half later the Pope issued a Bull giving general absolution to those who paid a Michaelmas pilgrimage to the Gnaden-Kirche or Church of Grace. In consequence of that, many thousands of pilgrims annually visited—and I believe still visit—Deggendorf. A hundred years ago the pilgrims on one occasion are said to have numbered fifty thousand.

Near to this pleasant old town of unpleasant memories are a number of "bergs" offering easy climbs and magnificent views up and down the Danube and over the Bayerischer and Böhmer Wälder. Indeed there are not wanting enthusiasts who regard this as one of the most beautiful bits of the beautiful river. One feels so often tempted to say this while at a "bit" which is specially pleasing that such a summing up has really but little value. Beautiful indeed is much of the journey between here and Passau—to say nothing of the further beauties beyond—but to pick out the best would be difficult.

Just below Deggendorf, comes in on the right another of those sixty navigable tributaries which, as Gibbon pointed out, go to swell the volume of the mighty river. This is the Isar, the river on which, some eighty miles away, stands Munich. Across the level land about the Isar's many mouths may be seen the spires of the old market town of Plattling—the last town upon that river. It is inevitable, when mentioning

the Isar, that one should think of Campbell's "Hohenlinden," with its opening verse—

"On Linden when the sun was low,
All bloodless lay the untrodden snow,
And dark as winter was the flow
Of Iser, rolling rapidly."

It has not much to do with the Danube, perhaps, but it may be pointed out here that Hohenlinden is about twenty miles as the crow flies from the nearest point on the Isar, and that the river nearest the battlefield is the Isen. Either Campbell misspelt the name of the river and was a little "out" in his geography, or else his printers made Isen into Iser—and since then the misprint has been generally adopted.

The poet's sojourn in Bavaria in the year 1800, was indeed fruitful of several verses besides the famous "Hohenlinden," which was written after his return to London, while three years earlier he had written "The Wounded Hussar" a piece of mechanical romanticism which was at one time widely popular—

"Alone to the banks of the dark rolling Danube
Fair Adelaide hied when the battle was o'er :
'Oh, whither,' she cried, 'hast thou wandered, my lover ?
Or here dost thou welter and bleed on the shore ?"

Where the Isar joins the Danube we may more fittingly recall the poet's "Song translated from the German."

"Sweet Iser ! were the sunny realm
And flowery gardens mine,
Thy waters I would shade with elm
To prop the tender vine ;
My golden flagons I would fill
With rosy draughts from every hill ;
And under every myrtle bower
My gay companions should prolong
The laugh, the revel, and the song,
To many an idle hour.

Like rivers crimsoned with the beam
Of yonder planet bright
Our balmy cups should ever stream
Profusion of delight ;
No care should touch the mellow heart,
And sad or sober none depart ;
For wine can triumph over woe,
And love and Bacchus brother powers
Could build in Iser's sunny bowers
A paradise below."

About this bit of the Danube there are a number of islands caused by the small branches of the Isar where it reaches the greater river. Still with the beautiful hills on the left and the plain on the right, the river goes on past small villages and hamlets. The next place with an arresting story is Nieder-Altaich, the site of another Benedictine monastery, and that at one time the most important of all which this powerful Order held in Bavaria. Here St. Parminius went through the same performance as at Ober-Altaich—destroying a Druid altar and cutting down its sheltering oak with his own hands—and here, also as at the other place, came the destroying Hungarians in the tenth century. The Benedictines showed again their great recuperative power, for the monastery was rebuilt and re-endowed before the close of the same century. Hither came St. Gotthard (born at Reichersdorf in 965) as a bare-foot candidate for a monk's cell ; here he rose to be abbot, until he was transferred as bishop to Hildesheim, where he died in 1035. Two and a half centuries later the monastery seems to have had a less worthy head, for it is said that in the year 1232, the monks of Nieder-Altaich lay in ambush and shot their abbot with arrows as he was crossing to Thundorf on the other side of the river.

The chronicles of the place have to tell of another unpopular abbot—one, however, who was removed from

the post in a less drastic fashion, for in an old Bavarian history there is record of an abbot of Nieder-Altaich who seems to have interpreted the rules of the Benedictine Order in a very liberal fashion, so far as he himself was concerned: "Besides his valet he had two pages. On his name-day all the principal persons of the government of Straubing assembled in the grand refectory of Nieder-Altaich. A band of trumpets and kettle-drums was in attendance from daybreak, facing his chamber window, and the moment his Excellency (for he had purchased the title of a privy councillor) opened his eyes, the pages undrew the curtains of cloth of gold, amidst a flourish from the trumpets and kettle-drums without, while a battery of small mortars proclaimed in thunder to the surrounding country, the dawning of the name-day of this important personage." It is said that not only did this worthy spend upwards of ninety thousand florins a year, but when he was made to retire he had run his monastery into a debt of over a hundred thousand florins. In his retirement he was reduced to an annuity of two hundred ducats. This abbot may well have thought that he was only ordering his life in a manner befitting the head of so magnificent an establishment, for it is recorded that ten times was the "Kloster" burnt down, and each successive destruction was only made the occasion for rebuilding it more splendidly than before, until "the very oxen of the community eat out of marble mangers." It is, perhaps, not surprising to find that this worthy was one of the last of the abbots of Nieder-Altaich.

The winding river goes by village after village, with here and there fresh ruins testifying to the past importance of the natural frontier afforded by the Danube. Inland, on the left, is the old castle of Hengersberg, said to have belonged to a mediæval St. Maurice, who is not to be confused with the Theban Christian martyred

with his legion by the orders of that Cæsar whom he sought to serve. Where the stream takes a short semi-circular bend to the south, a little way inland, on a low hillside, is Osterhofen, which is described as one of the oldest towns in Bavaria and the *Castra Petrensia* of the Romans, where a notable victory was won over the long-victorious Avars, who, introduced by Rome to Europe as allies, remained to be a standing menace to the Roman power. These Avars, who seem finally to have merged in the Huns, are described as at first appearing at Constantinople with their long hair hanging in tresses down their backs, and the description suggests that the gipsies to be met lower down the Danube may be their descendants. The defeat of the Avars at Osterhofen is said to have happened upon an Easter Sunday—in consequence of which the town gained its present name and right to bear a paschal lamb as its insignia. In the Oster-Wiese—or Easter Meadow—on which the battle was won, that Duke Uttilo, who had founded the monasteries of Ober- and Nieder-*Altaich*, is said to have erected yet another Benedictine monastery—only to have it destroyed by the vengeance-seeking Avars in 765.

Bending north again from Osterhofen the river soon reaches Winzer, with the ruins of a castle reduced to their present state by “the whiskered Pandoors and the fierce hussars” of Maria Theresa in 1741. At Hofkirchen, also on the left, we reach the ruined castle of another of those families of robber barons who were a law unto themselves, for Hofkirchen was the seat of the Counts of Ortenburg renowned as the persistent enemies of the Counts of Bogen, whose ruined place the Danube passed some distance to the west, and who were, as well, a standing danger to those who went down the Danube in boats. The quarrels between Bogen and Ortenburg were not of the kind of falling out among

thieves by which honest men come to their own, for the Counts of Ortenburg seem, indeed, to have been some of the most notorious of the powerful nobles who from their strongholds on the Danube enforced the predatory laws which they themselves enacted. Among their ingenuities, they devised or interpreted in their own fashion the "right" of "grundwehr," by which any vessel that grounded anywhere within their domain became confiscated, with all its cargo and *crew*. It had but to grate the sand or brush the shore, to touch in passing any island bank or shoal, to be captured by the Count's henchmen, who were ever on the watch. It is even said that these same henchmen did not scruple to chase any passing boat until they forced it to ground, and so could establish a "rightful" claim to it and all it contained! Well might Froissart say of the German barons of old "they are people worse than Saracens or Paynims; for their excessive covetousness quencheth the knowledge of honour."

On the right bank, a little inland on the rising ground, where the little Angerbach nears the Danube, is Kinzing or Künzing, another link with the Rome of old; for in place of its present short name is said to have been the earlier one of *Castra Quintana* or *Augusta Quintanorum Colonia*. Here is said to have lived in the fifth century a hermit saint, Severinus, though Gibbon makes that saint's dwelling place somewhere in Noricum, which was bounded on the west by the Inn and on the east by the Save. He is one of the two saints of this name, and is associated with the story of Odoacer, the first barbarian who was ruler of Italy on the downfall of the Western empire. "After the death of Odoacer's father, a leader of the Scyrri and officer of Attila's, the youth," says Gibbon, "led a wandering life among the barbarians of Noricum, with a mind and a fortune suited to the most desperate

adventures; and when he had fixed his choice, he piously visited the cell of Severinus, the popular saint of the country, to solicit his approbation and blessing. The lowness of the door would not admit the lofty stature of Odoacer: he was obliged to stoop; but in that humble attitude the saint could discern the symptoms of his future greatness; and addressing him in a prophetic tone, 'Pursue,' said he 'your design; proceed to Italy; you will soon cast away this coarse garment of skins; and your wealth will be adequate to the liberality of your mind.'" Among the miracles associated with the name of this St. Severinus is one that tells how in a time of flood he saved Kinzing from inundation by planting a cross on the Danube bank—succeeding by holiness and faith where mere pride, as in the case of Cnut, failed.

Another of the saint's doings suggests that workers of miracles have sometimes performed but thankless tasks. Severinus had a great friend named Sylvin, and when Sylvin died, the body was laid in a little wooden church outside the walls of the town. Severinus, going to the church to mourn his friend, bethought to restore him to life, and the miracle was duly performed—to the great annoyance of Sylvin, who reproached the saint saying, "I beg of thee, I conjure thee, not to rouse me from the rest which God has appointed for me! Why hast thou awakened me? Why hast thou brought me back into a world into which I never more wish to return?" Whether the saint had his way and Sylvin lived on, or whether the *revenant* was allowed to die again forthwith, we are not told.

The right bank of the Danube now begins to take on the more variedly picturesque beauty of the left as the ground becomes hillier. Pleinting, a small town, is passed on the right band—from which point the railway from Ratisbon keeps closely along the river to

Passau—and a little beyond on the left are the picturesque ruins of Hildegartsburg, “the hold of some robber knight, noble, or priest, of the Middle Ages” destroyed by the Duke of Austria as long ago as the middle of the fourteenth century. The next town, Vilshofen, which is on the right bank disputes with Osterhofen the claim to be considered as the *Castra Quintana* of the Romans. Here two streams the Vils and the Wolfbach empty themselves into the Danube. Though there is low-lying marshy land in the neighbourhood, the low hills from the south are sensibly drawn in to meet those on the further bank and so to form a beautiful stretch of the river. Vilshofen like so many other of the places along the Danube, in the days when the making of history largely followed the course of the great rivers, was the scene of much fighting. It seems to have belonged to the Counts of Ortenburg, and thus to have been assured of such a fate. Here, in the fourteenth century, one Heinrich Tuschl founded a religious house for men. Having discovered his wife to be unfaithful to him, he revenged himself, not by any mere method of divorce, but by having her walled up alive ; and thereafter (it is not surprising to learn) he abjured the company and shunned the sight of women. When he died he left his property to build this place in Vilshofen and on the charter of it he wrote—

“Zwei Hund an ain Bain
Ich Tuschl bleib allain ;”

or,

“Two dogs to one bone ;
I, Tuschl, stand alone.”

The canons of the place he thus founded bore the word “allain” on their arms, their clothes and their houses, and this, says Schultes, was latinized as “*Solus cum sola*.” Beyond Vilshofen and on to Passau is a lovely stretch of the river, with wooded hills on either side and

occasional villages. The swift stream, here broken up by submerged rocks, "boils" and foams along in a manner that is seen again and again on the journey. At points where the disturbance is more particularly marked the hurrying waters receive some special name, until they reach the most remarkable manifestation of their brokenness at the world-famous Iron Gate. Below Vilshofen, near the village of Sandbach the troubled waters are known as "the terrible Sandbach"; but as we see boats passing these places—among them being ferry boats taken by girls across the swirling waters—the terror is more in seeming than in reality, when experience and care are employed in navigation. Indeed the temerarious Englishmen who took out the "Water Lily" said that they found nothing dreadful, nothing their shallow craft could not negotiate with ordinary care. As their chronicler wrote of this stretch of the river, which had been described to them as one of the bugbears of the Danube: "On we went alone, and found that it was just what we had expected, a most exceedingly dangerous place for a heavily laden boat, but by no means so for our little cockle-shell, that only drew a few inches of water; rocks were scattered about the bed of the river in every direction, some above water, and some below; the white breakers surrounded us on every side; we came rather unpleasantly near one, but with steady pulling, careful steering, and quick obedience to the word of command, we came safely through."

Some way beyond "the terrible Sandbach" the road was cut more or less through the very rock right along the river side, and here is to be seen another of the Danube memorials in the form of a couchant lion on a pedestal placed upon a jutting rock above an inscription which records that the road was made by order of Maximilian Joseph, the first king of Bavaria. From near Heining—where a branch of the railway is carried

across the Danube, to the valley of the Ilz and the villages of the Wald—the towers of Mariahilf by Passau may be seen, and soon after the towers of Passau itself and the buildings on the high hills on the left bank to the north of the town.

II

THE AUSTRIAN DANUBE

CHAPTER IV

PASSAU TO LINZ

“Romance and History, hand in hand
Pass with us as we journey through the land
Where rocky heights with ruined castles crowned
Rise o'er the mighty stream.”

From the German

THOUGH Passau is a Bavarian city, it may fittingly be taken as the starting point of the Austrian Danube, because the frontier is but a little way farther downstream, and it is here that the navigation of the Danube, so far as passengers are concerned, begins. It is a fascinating and beautiful old city, beautifully and even fascinatingly situated on a narrow, pointed peninsula formed by the confluence of the Inn with the Danube, for it is here that the stream that rises in the Engadine, after its long journey through the Tyrol and Upper Bavaria, reaches the great river of which it is a tributary. It is only fitting that it should be an attractive old town that is situated at such an important meeting of the waters, and it seems only fitting, too, that it should be a town of no inconsiderable importance both in history and in legend. But Passau has also a third river, for immediately opposite the tree-grown point of the peninsula the Ilz from the Böhmer Wald comes in appropriately between well-wooded hills.

Passau itself, as has been said, is wonderfully situated on the long tongue of land on either side of which the waters of the Danube and of the Inn rush to their junction. The old town with its iron-shuttered houses

and shops, its beautiful "grilles," its houses more or less terraced upon the rising ground between the rivers, its narrow and tortuous ways, is full of fascinating bits, and every short walk brings us in sight of one or other of the rivers and their widely different further banks. On the north is a steep, densely wooded hillside with picturesque red-tiled buildings, and to the right, at the mouth of the Ilz, is the small town of Ilzstad—a medley of gabled houses, many chalet-like with their wooden balconies, and mostly painted or weathered various soft tints of pink, mauve, green or yellow; above is a simple church and the tree-grown hillside.

The wooded Georgsberg and Sturmberg on the north side offer many attractive walks and, from the outlook tower above the group of buildings known as the Oberhaus, a grand view. Two bridges—to which a third is being added—connect the old town with this precipitous hill, while another crosses the Inn. Across the latter river—here nearly fifty yards wider than the Danube—which may well seem the more important, are lower green hills with, on the bank, another "suburb" of Passau named Innstadt, above which are to be seen the twin towers of the Mariahilf Chapel.

Among the more notable of the "sights" which the city has to offer, first mention should perhaps be made of the massive-looking cathedral with its triple domes. Originally founded as early as the fifth century, it has been several times rebuilt—twice after destruction by fire. The central dome, choir and transept date from the fifteenth, but the main portion from the seventeenth century. To the west of the cathedral is the old Canon's Residence, on the site of an earlier building in which the Treaty of Passau was signed on 2 August, 1552; by that treaty the Lutherans were to be permitted the free exercise of their religion, so that the city of Passau occupies an important place in the history



OBERHAUS AND NIEDERHAUS, PASSAU

of liberal opinion and freedom of conscience. Yet it has also its memories of the terrors of intolerance; for in the one-time palace of the bishops of Passau was a special dungeon in which in the Middle Ages all Jews found in the town were incarcerated and left to die of starvation, while other dungeons were later given over to the merciless stamping out of the "Anabaptists."

To the east of the cathedral is the handsome Bishop's Palace with the ornate Wittelsbach Fountain in front.

On the Danube side—near to where the steamers of the Donau Dampfschiffahrts Gesellschaft start—stands the old Rathaus, with a handsome modern clock-tower, within which the sight-seer may visit the town museum and see a series of paintings by Herr F. Wagner depicting scenes in the history of Passau. On the further side of the town is a grand old cone-roofed tower—known as the Inn Tower or Powder Tower—forming a picturesque feature in the river view.

Above the wooded side of the Danube's left bank, the roofs and walls of the barrack-like Oberhaus are visible, dating from the early part of the thirteenth century, when it was built by a bishop as a fort to keep the people of Passau in becoming awe. From this a wall shows through the trees connecting it with the Niederhaus, a picturesque red-roofed group of buildings on the bank at the point where the Ilz runs into the Danube. The Oberhaus is a military prison, the Niederhaus was presented by the grateful townfolk of Passau to the Munich artist Herr Wagner on the completion of his series of historical paintings in the Rathaus. The journey up the Ilz to Hals and beyond is said to be particularly beautiful. Innstadt, connected with Passau by a long iron bridge—though the old Roman Boisdurum—is mostly a modern place owing to its having been destroyed by fire during the Napoleonic wars. On the hill above it, is the pilgrimage

chapel of Mariahilf, to be reached by a long flight of steps—up which I believe pilgrims used to journey on their knees. The centre of the pilgrim's interest is a "miraculous" figure of the Virgin with the Infant Jesus at one breast, while from the other, out of a little silver pipe, flowed water to which, not unnaturally, the devout of old ascribed great virtues. From the top of the steps is to be had a grand view of the town and its two great rivers; but indeed every eminence near affords such views in pleasing variety, and in each direction attractive excursions are to be made, so that Passau is not only a delightful place with a mediæval atmosphere, but a capital centre from which to make excursions into the Bayerischer Wald and the Böhmer Wald.

Passau was the *Castra Batava* of the Romans, and here probably a town has been ever since it was made a colony of Batavian veterans. For many centuries the place belonged to the bishops of Passau, so that the story of the city is largely a story of squabbles between the citizens and their episcopal lords. And it was not only Passau to which the bishops laid claim, but to a goodly extent of the surrounding country—downstream to beyond Linz and northwards far into the Wald. Their princely rule over the dominions only came to an end in 1802. It is said of one of these worthies that, despite his great revenues, he got into much debt, while in his affected contempt for pomps and vanities he had inscribed on the walls of his palace the line—

"O Welt! O böse Welt!"
("O world! O evil world!")

To this it is said one of his officers added—

"Wie übel verzehrest Du des Hochstifts Geld!"
("How ill consumeth thou the Chapter's gold!")

Better it is to remember that bishop of Passau who, as uncle of Kriemhilda, met her, entertained her

and speeded her on the way to her new kingdom. We saw that at Pförring the royal cavalcade from the Rhine reached the Danube and the next verses of the "Lay of the Nibelungs" tell how it reached Passau :

"Thence rode they swiftly forward down through Bavarian land
The people told the tidings of how a mickle band
Of unknown guests were coming, nigh where a cloister still
Doth stand, and where Inn river the Danube's flood doth fill.

"Within the town of Passau there was a bishop's see.
The hostels and the palace stood empty presently :
To meet the guests men hied them on to Bavarian ground,
Where Pilgerin the bishop the fair Kriemhilda found.

"The warriors of the country no whit displeased were
To see behind her coming so many ladies fair,
Their eyes upon these daughters of noble knights did rest,
Good lodging was provided for every noble guest.

"The bishop into Passau, his niece beside him, rode ;
And when among the burghers the news was noised abroad
That coming was Kriemhilda, their prince's sister's child,
Right gladly was she welcomed by all the merchant guild."

Not only does a bishop of Passau thus play his small part in the wonderful epic of the Nibelungs, but to one of their number, it is said, we owe it that the poem was ever written—that the legends on which it was based were rescued from oblivion. Says Planché, "Pelegrin, or Pilgerin, Bishop of Passau, who died in 991, collected the then current legends of the Nibelungen, which he committed to writing in the favourite Latin tongue, with the assistance of his scribe, Conrad, whose name has occasioned the Swabian poems to be sometimes ascribed to Conrad of Wurtzburg, who lived long after." This reference to Bishop Pelegrin as rescuer of the legends might seem curious, seeing that it is a bishop of the same name, who, as uncle of Kriemhilda, welcomes her to Passau in the poem ; but it is thus explained by Mr. Edward Bell in the introduction to the translation

in Bohn's Libraries, from which the above passage is quoted : * "It is known that, at the request of Bishop Pilgerin of Passau in the tenth century, the story was translated into Latin prose by Conrad, called 'the Scribe;' and to him is attributed the inclusion of the name of the said bishop as that of an actor in events which, so far as they are historical, belong to the fifth century." Kriemhilda's cavalcade we shall meet again on the journey down the river, for her bishop uncle accompanied her the greater part of the way onwards from Passau.

During the Thirty Years' War a "spell" by means of which fainthearted warriors secured themselves against sword and bullet, was associated with Passau. The Passau spell is like that of some primitive peoples who cure diseases by swallowing articles inscribed with magic words. All the soldier who feared his fate too much had to do, was to swallow a slip of paper containing certain potent sentences concluding : ' Teufel hilf mir ; Lieb und Seel geb ich dir ' (Devil help me ; body and soul give I thee). The spell needed twenty-four hours of digestion before becoming operative—the penalty being that if the swallower died within those hours of disgrace, he went straight to the Devil whose aid he had sought !

The dark waters of the Ilz, the "murky yellow" of the Inn, and the "milky tint" of the Danube, are said to be recognizable some distance after they have joined their streams in one, but such differentiation I must confess I did not observe ; certainly they combine to make a noble stream where it sweeps past the closely wooded Klosterberg just below the town, on the left bank. Most Danube travellers—other than those with time and energy for walking—will from this point see

* "The Lay of the Nibelungs." Metrically translated from the old German text by Alice Horton, and edited by Edward Bell, M.A., 1898.

the river from the deck of one of the pleasantly appointed steamers of the Danube Steamship Company, and looking backwards as the swift stream carries the vessel to the bend which cuts the view from sight, they have a fine general view of Passau and its surroundings. In the centre of the picture are the roofs and towers of Passau, to the left the spires of the chapel of Mariahilf above Innstadt, and to the right the Oberhaus upon its tree-grown rocky height, and between the two rivers rushing to form one.

Passau is, as has already been said, the starting place for the passenger steamers of the Danube Steamship Navigation Company. From here we may on these vessels—changing now and again into larger boats as we proceed—journey the many hundred miles of waterway that lie between here and the Black Sea. And very pleasant journeying it is, the steamers being thoroughly well equipped and providing within their necessarily circumscribed space, all the comforts of a good and moderate hotel. I feel impelled to say this because readers of some old books on Danube travel might fancy that conditions had not changed since the authors of those books wrote their strong condemnations. In a work published in 1854, on "Frontier Lands of the Christian and the Turk," the following emphatic words appear: "The Danube steamers are a disgrace to Austria. Nothing could be worse than the manner in which they are conducted. The want of civility towards strangers is most offensive, the imposition of the stewards in their charges for food is quite shameful, the irregularity and disorder in the arrangements on board are exceedingly annoying, and the total contempt of cleanliness everywhere visible is altogether disgusting." To-day those words are merely ridiculous. Every sentence should now be rewritten in the very opposite sense. I journeyed on many of the steamers—the

appointments of which may well make Londoners wish that the Thames had a service of steamers in any way comparable! The boats are, indeed, thoroughly up-to-date; the cost of living in them is anything but extravagant, and the standard of comfort excellent. They are as far removed from the style described by the writer I have quoted, as our third-class railway carriages are from the open trucks in which our grandparents journeyed when railways were new.

It is interesting to learn that it was as early as 1819 that patent rights were first granted for navigation of the Danube by steam vessels, though little seems to have been done for ten years. Then in 1828, a new patent for fifteen years was granted to two Englishmen, John Andrews and Joseph Pritchard, through whose energies the Danube Steamship Company was formed. In 1830, the first steamer was put on the river, and thenceforward the development was rapid. Four years later the first steamer safely passed the Iron Gate and voyaged down to Galatz. Now the Danube Steamship Company has an immense fleet of passenger boats and tugs navigating the Danube from Ratisbon to Sulina, as well as some of the chief tributaries of the great river; Hungary has another fine river steamship service as well, and so also has Rumania.

The coming of the steamers meant the passing of the old "ordinari" or mixed passenger and merchandise boats which bygone travellers describe, and we no longer see these cumbersome but picturesque craft with the cabins like floating wooden huts, their many men at the oars, or long oar-steering work, drifting mostly with the stream downwards and being towed upwards—sometimes by a body of men and sometimes by large teams of horses. The men who hired out these horses were known as "Jodelen" and it is said that there would sometimes be as many as thirty or forty horses drawing four or five

boats fastened together. These "Jodelen" are described as having had a superstition that some of their number must every year be sacrificed to the Spirit of the Water, and as a consequence when an accident occurred they would all scramble for the drowning man's hat but never think of "stretching a finger to save him whom they look upon as a doomed and demanded victim." Less than a hundred years ago a traveller declared that he had seen five "Jodelen" with their horses precipitated into the river, when their companions hastily cut the ropes to prevent the rest of the team from following, and drove on, leaving the poor wretches to their fate. The coming of the steamers must, it may well be believed, have greatly lessened the toll of life taken by the Danube, though when we see the timber rafts floating down with three or four men at either end using their great steering sweeps, and remember some of the places where the swift current "boils" at the various rapids, we cannot help feeling that it must be hazardous work.

Once round the bend to the left immediately below the beautiful old city, and with the view of Passau cut off, we naturally look forwards, and find that we are entering newly grand scenery, where both sides of the river are high, rocky and pine-clad. Where the railway bridge crosses the river, we pass, so far as the right bank is concerned, from Bavaria into Austria. The left bank for some time yet continues to be Bavarian.

As the river takes us through lovely scenery, past several tree-grown islands, we get glimpses now and again of villages, but nothing to call for special mention before the castle of Krämpelstein is seen on the abrupt rocky cliff of the right bank, backed by pine woods. This castle was long the property of the powerful bishops of Passau, who, in virtue of its possession, took "toll from all passing boats." Local tradition gives it the name of "Schneiderschlössl" and, in various forms, tells of an

unhappy tailor who, in throwing a dead goat from the building into the river, himself toppled over and was killed, his mangled body being immediately swept away by the rapid current—and that in the very presence of the Bishop of Passau, lord of the castle, for whom he had just been engaged in cutting out a new suit. Soon it came to be rumoured that it was no genuine goat that the tailor had thrown over but the Devil himself, who had taken on the semblance of a dead goat the easier to make a victim, and that directly the tailor fell the supposed defunct quadruped was seen half flying, half running up the precipitous rocks. As soon as this portentous news was made known the bishop's chaplain made the sign of the cross, and sprinkled holy water down the face of the cliff—and, alive or dead, the goat was seen no more. Pity for the poor tailor was soon turned into "serve him right" for "early in the morning when the brocade was measured, it was discovered that in cutting it out for the bishop's robe, as already stated, the crafty *schneider* had cabbaged at least a third of the precious material. All were amazed; and now the sudden destruction that had overtaken the delinquent was no longer a mystery; for the goat, as the chaplain clearly explained, had here acted the part both of judge and executioner, and carried off the tailor in the very midst of his wickedness. "And so will it ever happen," he added, "to all who shall attempt thus impiously and dishonestly to curtail the bishop either in his robe or his revenue." That same year, as it was afterwards proved, the offerings made to the bishop at Krämpelstein, were nearly doubled; rents and imposts were paid three days before they became due; while the story of the "brocade" had so good an effect upon the *schneider*-craft, that thenceforward little more than half the former quantity of buckskin was found sufficient for the stoutest knight in Bavaria.

The castle of this legend occupies a grandly picturesque position on a jutting spur of rock, close neighboured by other pine-clad rocky heights. From this beautiful point the river sweeps leftwards again, and soon on the lower ground of the left side is seen the town of Oberzell, the first "port of call," backed by hills and trees. This place has long been famous "all the world over" for its manufacture of crucibles and for its graphite quarries. Beyond, the scenery becomes again more mountainous. On the right is seen the village of Kasten, and a little further the high-perched castle of Viechtenstein forms another picturesque feature in the landscape, another reminder of the olden times when all along the river powerful nobles had their strongholds. Before the bishops of Passau got hold of it, the castle had belonged to the Counts of Wassenburg—worthy fellows, it is said of those who ruled at Bogen and elsewhere on the river. One of these Counts, on setting out for the Crusades had pledged Viechtenstein to the Bishop of Passau with the understanding that if the Count did not return the bishop might at once take possession. The Count did return, however, and when he died, left the castle to his widow. The bishop laid claim to it, and sought to get possession, only to be defeated and taken prisoner. But the episcopal voice was more powerful than the episcopal arms, and by pronouncing a ban of excommunication against all who had withstood him, the bishop not only succeeded in winning his freedom but the castle to boot!

A little further downstream, a rock, standing about thirty feet above the stream and dividing the channel, takes the attention. This is the Jochenstein, a natural boundary as it were; north of it is Bavaria, south of it is Austria, and on either side of it the arms of these countries were long since duly placed. From time to time, the Danube water sprite Isa—"a harmless sister

of the Lorelei of the Rhine"—is said here to make her appearance.

A little below the Jochenstein, where the ruined tower of Ried shows above the trees, and where a small stream the Dirndlbach, flows into the Danube is the actual boundary ; after passing which we have Austria on either hand. Beyond the fact that it is said to have been destroyed by the conquering Swedes in the seventeenth century, tradition seems to have nothing to say of this old castle on the fir-clad hill ; although its name is supposed to be the only survival of an old tribe, the Rheadarii, who inhabited the district. Just beyond, on the right, is Engelhartzell, the first of the steamer stopping places in Austrian territory, and the one-time seat of an old Cistercian monastery once known as that of the Angels. The monastery has in modern times come to be used as the residence of a noble family.

On between beautiful wooded hills the rapid river passes, the next object to attract particular attention being the high-perched castle of Ranariedl. This old castle, which has the distinction of being still inhabited overlooks the delightful valley of the Ranna Bach which here in mountainous haste reaches the Danube by the village of Nieder Ranna. Though still inhabited, the castle saw its share of fighting in the Middle Ages, when the powerful bishops of Passau and various Counts successively struggled for its possession. Shortly beyond, and again on the left, is another and similar hill-top castle—that of Marsbach—with a similar story of disputed ownership. This, too, passed into the hands of the bishops of Passau, not, however, before it had been a bone of contention between father and son ; for in the thirteenth century, Ortulph of Marsbach was turned out by his son Otto and only regained the place by paying his rebellious son, a sum "which so reduced his finances that he was compelled to give up the castle after all to Passau, in

order to relieve himself from his difficulties." Its later history accords well with that of other lordly homes that we pass on the banks of the river, for in the fifteenth century it was owned by certain lords of Oberhaimer, who carried on such plundering ways as their fellows did further up and lower down the stream.

With robber nobles every few leagues along the Danube one may well wonder, indeed, how any travellers or merchants ever got themselves or their merchandise safely to the journey's end. One of these grasping Oberhaimers is said to have attacked the boat of one Valentine Rottenburgher, a councillor of Steyr, and at one fell swoop to have carried off booty amounting to seven hundred florins. In 1626—it would be pleasant to believe as vengeance for such deeds as that just mentioned—a peasant-leader named Spatt attacked the castle successfully and put the garrison to the sword.

At Wesenufer is a huge wine-cellar—so huge that it is asserted that a coach-and-four might be turned in it—said to have been hewn in the living rock by the command of the Chapter of the cathedral of Passau, and the story runs that in 1626 Duke Adolf von Holstein with several thousand soldiers hurrying to the relief of some besieged place landed here with disastrous results. His soldiers commandeered the contents of the cellar and drank not wisely by too well, so that "the armed peasantry, descending from the hills before daybreak, fell on the fuddled Swabians, as they lay 'somno vinoque sepulti,' and slaughtered the greater part of them. The Duke himself narrowly escaped in his doublet, and with the loss of all his property."

The beautiful river becomes more impressively beautiful as it passes on here through some of the most remarkable of its tortuous windings, which continue from a little beyond Marsbach to Aschach. This, the Schlägen, is indeed generally acknowledged to afford

the grandest series of varied views between Passau and Linz. Before the river takes its first abrupt turn round the precipitous mountain on the left, the ruin on the summit of that mountain stands sentinel as it were over the entrance to the serpentine defile. This is the remains of another robber-knight's stronghold, known as Haichenbach to which the vague tradition attaches of an owner in the thirteenth century who, having slain his brother, retired here to end his days in solitude relieved only by the presence of his daughter. The castle was reduced to its present state by the Emperor Maximilian the First.

A little way beyond, and the Danube whirls and swirls round the long jutting mountain on which the ruin stands, and so far "doubles in its tracks" that soon Haichenbach again comes in sight. The Schlägen, with its ever-rushing flood of water, its rocky sides now precipitous, now broken and pinnacled, now bare and craggy, now grown with fir and other trees, offers a succession of impressive scenes before which "the grandest views upon the Rhine sink into insignificance."

Planché, taking a passage from Burke's famous essay, suggests that where the Rhine stands for the beautiful the Danube represents the sublime. As one knowing little more of the Rhine than can be seen from the railway, I am scarcely qualified to make any comparison; but I should wish to amend Planché's finding so as to credit the Danube with beauty as well as sublimity, for it assuredly has both. "From Mayence to Cologne there is scarcely one mile of uninterrupted wild scenery; and even if there were, the charm would be broken by some pert galley, with its white awning and gaudy flag, some lumbering Dutch *beurtschiff*, or, worse than all, the monstrous anachronism of a steamboat, splashing, spluttering and fuming along at the rate of twelve miles

an hour.* The mouldering towers that totter upon the crags of the Danube, on the contrary, are surrounded by scenery rude as the times in which they were reared, and savage as the warriors who dwelt in them. Nothing seems changed but themselves. The solitary boat that now and then glides by them, is of the same fashion as that on which their marauding masters sallied down, perhaps three hundred years ago. The humble cottages that here and there peep through the eternal firs, and the church that rears its dusky spire upon some neighbouring hill, are of the same age. The costume of the poor straggling fishermen and woodcutters around them is scarcely altered ; and, indeed, one cannot look upon their own walls, blackened by fire and crumbling in the blast, without conjuring up the form of their ancient lord newly returned from Palestine, and finding his mountain-fastness burnt and pillaged by some neighbouring knight or prelate, with whom he was at feud, and on whom he now stands meditating swift and bloody retribution. For hours and hours the traveller may wind through these rocky defiles without meeting one object to scare the spirit of romance, which rises here in all her gloomy grandeur before him."

The sentimentalist who needed gloomy grandeur as a necessary setting for romance went on to say that he would almost weep to see a post road cut beside the lonely Schlägen, or a steamboat floundering and smoking through the Strudel and the Wirbel. There is as yet no post road along the Schlägen—there is little likely to be, it may well be thought—but daily steamers "flounder and smoke" through the lovely scenery of the Strudel and Wirbel.

Schlägen is the name of the village on the right bank

* Planché journeyed down the Danube in 1827 ; three years later the first of his "monstrous anachronisms" was plying on it !

where the first turn of the river sweeps round Haichenbach's rocky ridge, into the "gloomy defile" where the precipitous cliffs rise in some places as much as a thousand feet above the river, here greatly contracted in width. Says the chronicler of the adventurous boat journey: "on turning the sharp corner of Schlägen, where the river almost runs back in the contrary direction to that which it did immediately before, we found ourselves in the most imposing part of this splendid pass, the hills on each [side] rising nearly one thousand feet from the water's edge; the water was boiling and seething as if over a fire, which imparted a motion to our boat, somewhat like that which one feels when sitting in the back seat of a dog-cart, with the horse galloping; which is a peculiar sensation, I assure you, fair reader, and if you have a brother and he has such a vehicle, make him take you a turn in that fashion, and you will understand how we felt as we swung round the rocky corners of the confined and tortuous defile." The journey is less exciting, but no less memorable, taken on a steamer to-day.

After passing the northern side of the ridge on which Haichenbach stands the Danube swerves again almost as sharply round the rocky cliff of the right bank—the sinuosities of its course are so complicated, that within the space of twelve or fifteen miles it flows towards all the four points of the compass, only to bend again to the right as it nears the pleasant village of Ober Mühl at the foot of a hill where the Kleine Mühlbach flows in from the mountains. Again it sweeps round a kind of peninsula-point to the left, and so past Unter Mühl to a sight of Neuhaus, high on its almost perpendicular rock. This is also known as the Schloss Schaumburg from the name of the Counts who once owned it, but who lost it to Austria.

When the Turks invaded Hungary and threatened Austria this castle was utilized as an asylum of refuge

for women and children. In 1626 during the Peasants' Revolt the insurgents got possession of Neuhaus, imprisoning the Countess-owner in the castle, and drew great chains across the river to intercept all boats and stop supplies from reaching Linz ; but even cables of twenty pounds to a link failed, for the Bavarian boats broke through them. Beyond this old rocky stronghold the hills rapidly decrease in height as we near, on the right, Aschach, which was the headquarters of the Peasants' Revolt. This is a pleasant little town stretching along the river bank close to the commencement of the flat stretch of country through which the river now passes for some miles. The not very lofty Pöstlingberg, ten miles away by Linz, can be seen from here.

The story of this little town is the story of a succession of warlike troubles. In 1626 it was captured and plundered by the revolted peasantry, and again in another rising half a dozen years later. A century ago, too, the town is said to have suffered greatly from friend and foe alike in the Napoleonic wars. In the tenth century the Duke of Bavaria gave the monks of Krems-Münster certain vineyards at Aschach, and the town long had the reputation of being the most easterly point on the Danube for wine-growing. "The wine made in its neighbourhood is remarkable only for its badness, and is the standing joke of the inhabitants themselves ; we must suppose, therefore, that it has either sadly degenerated since Thassilo made the vineyards a present to his friends at Krems-Münster, or that the fraternity were in want of an immediate supply of vinegar."

Behind is an extensive castle of the Schaumburgs, with a lofty tower, the chief seat of a powerful family at once dreaded and courted by neighbouring rulers. Tradition says that the river once ran by the walls of the castle, and also that it played a tragic part in the

fate of one of the Counts, who, though invincible in battle or tournament, could not resist the charms of a fair maiden, "armed at both eyes," the daughter of a miller in the valley of Aschach. One night as he was riding to a rendezvous with her, his horse started at the sudden appearance of a fiery dragon that rushed out of a thicket before him, and plunged with his master over a precipice into the swollen torrent below; the first objects that met the unfortunate maiden's sight when she opened her casement in the morning, were the floating corpses of her noble lover and his favourite steed. A stone pillar near a brook in the valley before the castle duly commemorated the tragic incident.

Below Aschach the river widens out and branches about around innumerable wooded islands and islets which cut off the view across the flat wide valley, though the mountains in the distance are still at times to be glimpsed. Just below the town where the Aschach Bach comes in behind a long island, are the ruins of Stauf, an old castle of the Counts of Staumberg—its picturesque white tower backed by the green hills. On a clear day, too, from this southward turn of the Danube may be had a glimpse of the far Styrian Alps. For some distance the journeyer along the Danube has the view cut off by the many islands formed by the branches of the river. A number of villages are passed on either side. To the south is Efferding where Kriemhilda rested on her journey from Passau, and where, in 1626, Count Pappenheim inflicted a crushing defeat on the insurrectionary peasants—of whom he is said to have slain 40,000 in putting down the revolt. "It was," he declared, "as if my cavalry had to combat the massive rocks; for these peasants fought not like men, but like infernal furies!" The peasants, it should be said, fought for that freedom to exercise their Protestant religion which had been granted at Passau three-quarters of a

century earlier. In this defeat at Efferding the leader of the peasants, a hatter named Stephen Fidinger, was slain; and subsequently his body was taken from the grave and gibbeted as a warning to those of his followers who still stubbornly resisted. Some distance inland on the left, on a rocky spur, is the castle of Freudenstein. But nothing much that is noteworthy is visible beyond the labyrinth of willow-grown islands through which the river finds its way.

Approaching hillier country as it nears Linz, the Danube trends again to the north-east, and Ottensheim is seen on the left with its handsome chateau rising from among a leafy mass of trees and forming a picturesque "bit." The town was mostly destroyed by fire about a dozen years ago. A little further along on the right is Kloster Wilhering with an extensive and once widely powerful Cistercian Abbey founded in the twelfth century, but the present buildings were erected in the eighteenth. It is backed by the Kirnbergwald—the pines of which are seen for most of the rest of the journey to Linz. Here the river enters a beautiful valley with varied woodland-grown hills on either side, with the high Pöstlingberg crowned with its pilgrimage church showing ahead. Beyond Buchenau, with its compact church on the left, is seen on the right the Kalvarienberg, or Mount Calvary, the little chapels and crucifix of which together offer a place of pilgrimage for the citizens of Linz. With its falling waters, its craggy rocks and pine trees, it forms a pleasantly picturesque spot. From Ottensheim to Linz, it may be added, the railway keeps closely along the left bank. By wooded hills, the high Pöstlingberg on the left, and the lower yet steeply impressive height, close grown with fir, on the right, the river reaches Linz on the right bank, having Urfahr on the opposite side, with which it is connected by an ugly lattice iron bridge, over nine hundred feet in length.

Linz, the capital of Upper Austria, is a clean, prosperous-looking town, the straight lines of its buildings contrasting strongly with the delightful irregularity of Passau ; and its air of modernity gives no suggestion that as *Lentia* it was one of the Roman stations on the Danube. Possibly when the Huns destroyed it they did so with thoroughness. At the western end of the broad valley through which the river continues for many miles, and backed by the hills, Linz is picturesquely situated, though it is necessary to climb the hills to appreciate this properly. There are a number of churches, a handsome museum, and other fine buildings, but the town itself does not claim long attention, except as an admirable centre for beautiful excursions on both sides of the river. The fine Franz Joseph Platz is seen at its best when, crowded with the stalls and carts of market time, it presents a lively and picturesque scene. The Trinity Column in the centre of it was erected early in the eighteenth century to commemorate the deliverance of the town from two scourges—the Turks and the plague. Pestilence in the olden times seems, indeed, to have been so constant a menace to many of these towns that it is matter for wonder that people were left to take part in the no less constant warfare.

Looking up-stream from the bridge, we have a view reminiscent of the Highlands of Scotland, the rocky hill rising from the water, dark with its close-grown trees is surmounted by the Franz Joseph Watch-tower, an observation point from which grand views are to be had both up and down the river. There are other fine views from different parts of this hill, if the watch tower is approached from the town by way of the Freinberg, but the most delightful way of reaching the tower is by following the Danube-side road and taking the steep path up through the woodland, or from the Kalvarienberg. *The* view-point of the neighbourhood,

however, is the summit of the Pöstlingberg on the north side of the river, which may be reached by tramway from Linz, and thence by the mountain railway which ascends the berg from Urfahr. For the lover of fine prospects—and we do not know a tract of country properly unless we can now and again get some approximation to a bird's-eye view—the outlook from the Pöstlingberg is one of the grandest along the Danube—

“Afar the Salzburg and the Styrian Alps
In forms gigantic rear their frozen scalps :
And there the rugged Trauntstein loves to throw
His mingling shadows o'er the lake below.
While mountain, river, forest, field proclaim
A glorious landscape in a magic frame.”

Whether as ancient *Lentia* when it was destroyed by the conquering Huns, or as modern Linz, the town has seen more than its share of warlike trouble. Again and again it was besieged during the disturbed Middle Ages. Its great benefactor was the Emperor Frederick the Third, who when it was rebuilt after a disastrous fire, made it, in 1490, the capital of Upper Austria. Here, three years later, after a reign of more than half a century he died, having—at the age of seventy-eight—to suffer amputation of the leg. The story told of him suggests that he must have been a vigorous old man, for it is said that, taking the severed limb in his hand, he remarked: “What difference is there between an emperor and a peasant? or, rather, is not a sound peasant better than a sick emperor? Yet I hope to enjoy the greatest good which can happen to man: a happy exit from this transitory life.” In the Napoleonic wars Linz suffered greatly, being thrice within a decade one of the storm centres. In 1805, during his rapid advance on Vienna, Napoleon made this town his headquarters.

To turn from warfare to more peaceful matters—

for the full story of Danubian warfare would make a volume by itself larger than this—it is interesting to find that John Kepler, one of the founders of modern astronomy, lived here for some years, and here married in 1613, a portionless orphan named Susanna Reutlinger. In a letter to a friend, Kepler reviewed the various qualifications of no fewer than eleven “candidates for his hand,” and explained the reasons that decided him in his choice. It seems so curiously unromantic a beginning, that it is pleasant to learn from the astronomer’s biographers that the marriage turned out well. We get a glimpse of the scientist at home in a letter which Sir Henry Wotton wrote to Francis Bacon in 1620:—

“For a beginning let me tell your Lordship a pretty thing which I saw coming down the Danuby, though more remarkable for the application than for the theory. I lay a night at Lintz, the metropolis of the higher Austria, but then in very low estate, having been newly taken by the Duke of Bavaria, who, *blandiente fortuna*, has gone on to the late effects. There I found Keplar, a man famous in the sciences, as your Lordship knows, to whom I purpose to convey from hence [Vienna] one of your books, that he may see that we have some of our own that can honour our king, as well as he hath done with his *Harmonica*. In this man’s study I was much taken with the draft of a landscape on a piece of paper, methought masterly done : whereof inquiring the author, he bewrayed with a smile it was himself ; adding, he had done it, *non tanquam pictor, sed tanquam mathematicus*. This set me on fire. At last he told me how. He hath a little black tent (of what stuff is not much importing) which he can suddenly set up where he will in a field, and it is convertible (like a windmill) to all quarters at pleasure, capable of not much more than one man, as I conceive, and perhaps at no great ease ;

exactly close and dark, save at one hole, about an inch and a half in diameter, to which he applies a long perspective trunk, with a convex glass fitted to the said hole, and the concave taken out at the other end, which extendeth to about the middle of this erected tent, through which the visible radiations of all the objects without are intromitted, falling upon a paper which is accommodated to receive them : and so he traceth them with his pen in their natural appearance, turning his little tent round by degrees, till he hath designed the whole aspect of the field. This I have described to your Lordship, because I think there might be good use made of it for chorography : for otherwise to make landscapes of it were illiberal, though surely no painter can do them precisely." The thing upon which Wotton dilated was the camera obscura of which he had evidently not heard before, though it had been described sixty years earlier by Baptista Porta, to whom the invention is sometimes attributed.

Though I did not notice that the womenfolk of other places along the Danube were, speaking generally, less beautiful than those of Linz, it should perhaps be mentioned that most writers about the town draw attention to the beauty of the Linz women, or at least to their being long celebrated for beauty. One writer goes so far as to say that transcendently beautiful women are so carefully guarded from the public eye that a month may be spent in the town by the most susceptible tourist without his "seeing a face that could endanger his peace. Poets nevertheless," continues the same writer after that ungallant assertion, "have caught much inspiration on the spot and found a prolific theme in the fair maids of Linz, and tourists under the old regime have lent their willing aid in propagating their fame. The annexed ballad relates the fate of one, who, in her day, was the "pride of Linz."

THE DANUBE

“ Her cheek was bright, her eye was blue,
 Her smile inspired such nameless rapture,
 That not a swain who met her view
 But she could fascinate and capture.

By men of war and men of fame,—
 By ‘ stars and medals ’ she was courted :
 But still the fair and cruel dame
 With all their wounds and sorrows sported ;

For her the soldiers fought and swore,
 The statesman lied, the lawyer cheated ;
 And bards their rhymes in anguish tore,
 To find their schemes were so defeated !—

But years flew by—the homage ceased ;
 And now with age and sorrow laden,
 In cloister weeds she tells her beads—
 Alas ! for Linz’s fairest maiden ! ”

The moral seems to be that in affairs of the heart there is safety in one rather than in numbers.

Before leaving Linz it may be as well to recall a very clever acrostic which I am told Mr. H. R. Lewis wrote in a visitors’ book when visiting the town about a quarter of a century ago. It ran thus :—

“ Mit ein-und-fünzig fängt es an
 Nach tausend Kommst das nächste ;
 Und, kennst Du wohl Dein alphabet
 So findest Du das letzte.”

This may be roughly Englished as follows :—

“ First one-and-fifty [L1], then the next
 A thousand is just past [N] ;
 And, if you know your alphabet,
 At once you find the last [Z].”

It is rarely indeed that the entries made in visitors’ books—shrines in which inky offerings to the belly-gods are mostly inscribed—are quite as happy as this.

CHAPTER V

LINZ TO THE WACHAU

“ . . . the Strudel and the Wirbel form
Dangers more fierce than devastating storm,
Where the great waters with tumultuous roar,
Through the defile their pent-up currents pour.”

From the German

BELOW Linz again we have something of a dramatic change in the scenery of the river.

Behind us are the mountains, and for a while they neighbour us fairly closely on the left ; but for some miles it is between willow-grown shores and among islets that the Danube finds its way. For a while the river runs in a north-easterly direction, as though against the Pfennigberg, but soon turns south-easterly again round it, and so reaches the long, islanded stretch which continues most of the way to the Wachau. Near where the river Traun comes in from the right, is, on the left, though hidden from view, the old town of Steyregg, or Steyereck, with a castle at one time the possession of a family, a member of which, at the Battle of Marchfeld, rescued the Emperor Rudolph the First, founder of the House of Habsburg, from a gigantic Thuringian knight who had unhorsed and wounded him.

At one of the mouths of the Traun, hidden behind islands, is Traundorf, famous for its crawfish. A little distance up it is Ebelsberg, scene of a sanguinary battle between the French and Austrians on 3 May, 1809. “ From twelve to sixteen thousand men fell in this terrible

conflict, and the banks of the Traun, from Ebelsberg to the Danube, were literally covered with the slain." Here, too, in the Peasant's War the insurgents were overcome, and lost two thousand men. And these are but two of the incidents in the stormy history of the town.

As has been said, the journey from Linz to the commencement of the Wachau is mostly through the willow-grown islands of a broad valley, It was possibly hereabouts that the Emperor Julian "the Apostate" reached the Danube on his remarkable march to assured Empire. Gibbon has summarized the story in graphic fashion. Having assembled a great army near Basle, he divided it into three unequal portions—one was to go through the northern parts of Italy, another through the centre of Rhætia and Noricum :

"The instructions to the generals were conceived with energy and precision ; to hasten their march in close and compact columns, which, according to the disposition of the ground, might readily be changed into any order of battle ; to secure themselves against the surprises of the night by strong posts and vigilant guards ; to prevent resistance by their unexpected arrival ; to elude examination by their sudden departure ; to spread the opinion of their strength, and the terror of his name ; and to join their sovereign under the walls of Sirmium.

"For himself, Julian had reserved a more difficult and extraordinary part. He selected three thousand brave and active volunteers, resolved, like their leader, to cast behind them every hope of a retreat ; at the head of this faithful band, he fearlessly plunged into the recesses of the Marcian or Black Forest, which conceals the sources of the Danube, and for many days the fate of Julian was unknown to the world. The secrecy of his march, his diligence, and vigour, surmounted every obstacle ; he forced his way over mountains and

morasses, occupied the bridges, or swam the rivers, pursued his direct course, without reflecting whether he traversed the territory of the Romans, or of the barbarians, and at length emerged, between Ratisbon and Vienna, at the place where he designed to embark his troops on the Danube. By a well-concerted stratagem he seized a fleet of light brigantines, as it lay at anchor; secured a supply of coarse provisions, sufficient to satisfy the indelicate, but voracious appetite, of a Gallic army; and boldly committed himself to the stream of the Danube. The labours of his mariners, who plied their oars with incessant diligence, and the steady continuance of a favourable wind, carried his fleet above seven hundred miles in eleven days, and he had already disembarked his troops at Boncnia [Widdin] only nineteen miles from Sirmium, before his enemies could receive any certain intelligence that he had left the banks of the Rhine."

It was possibly somewhere on this stretch of the river that the "fleet of brigantines" was seized and the rapid voyage to Constantinople begun, but of the actual place of embarkation there appears to be no record. Certainly, with a favourable wind, and the energy of oarsmen, aided by the swift current of the stream, the expedition may well have made progress rapid enough to satisfy even the impatience of the astute Julian. Now, in place of the Roman brigantines, are seen the passenger steamers by which we moderns can do the same journey in about four days. The coming of the steamship has probably lessened the number of craft on the river, though as we journey along, we see sometimes a number of the great long barges with high-perched steering houses at the stern, and each with a neat little dwelling hut on the deck, generally noticeable for the attempt at "gardening," made with boxes, pots or tubs, of flowering plants, and even occasionally of

good-sized oleanders. These barges are towed, sometimes half a dozen at a time, by strong tug-steamers. Fairly extensive timber rafts, too, are seen, sometimes with as many as four or five steersmen at each end—every steersman working a very long oar-like board by way of rudder. Some of the tugs drawing these barges are armed at the prow with a kind of dredging apparatus, by means of which they can work their way along through unexpected shallows. For, deep as is the Danube in places, in others it is so shallow as to be scarcely navigable at times of low water.

The constant variations of depth make the navigation a matter of constant study, as it is sometimes impossible for steamers to pass under the bridges, while at low water, even in the navigable channel, there is in places but a foot of water beneath the keel. Passing down one stretch of the river we may find it to be a broad unbroken surface, and returning a few weeks later, see that surface broken up by long islands of white shingle.

Nature has provided a forecaster of what is to happen in this regard. On islets or banks we may occasionally see a solitary fisch-reiher, or heron, or may see one steadily flapping across the water ahead of us. From the captain of the steamer we learn that the bird is known, to those whose business it is to study the changing aspects of the river, as the "water maker," for if it is found standing in the shallows with its beak up-stream, there is going to be high water, if pointing down-stream, then a period of low water is approaching. Such is the local lore, whether scientifically accurate or not I cannot say, and I certainly was not given the opportunity of seeing two neighbouring birds, the one fishing up, and the other down stream!

Returning from the general to the particular, as we near Mauthausen, the first of the steamer's stopping places after Linz, we pass the ruins of the castle of Spielberg,

an old robber-knight's hold, which, unlike most of those we see, was built down near the water's edge. Some distance inland, on the right bank, on high ground are the monastery of St. Florian and the castle of Tillysberg, both places worthy of a visit from those staying in the neighbourhood, and both easily reached by railway from Linz. The large Augustinian monastery, which is the oldest in Austria, was built in memory of one of the martyrs of the Diocletian persecution. Florian, who was thrown into the river Enns with a stone tied to his neck, is said to have appeared posthumously, and given directions where his body was to be found. Where he was buried an altar was erected and later the altar was succeeded by a church, the church by a monastery.

The present extensive buildings were erected in the eighteenth century, but the crypt is said to date from the thirteenth. St. Florian's, which has a valuable library of many thousand volumes, was visited by Dr. Dibdin during his famous "Bibliographical Tour," and was described by him with enthusiasm. In the remarkable abbey church he was particularly struck by the "gorgeous and imposing" organ; "the pipes have completely the appearance of polished silver; and the woodwork is painted white, richly relieved with gold. For size and splendour I had never seen anything like it. The *tout ensemble* was perfectly magical. On entering, the organ burst forth with a power of intonation—every stop being opened—such as I have never heard exceeded—as there were only a few present, the sounds were necessarily increased, by being reverberated from every part of the building; and for a moment it seemed as if the very dome would have been unroofed, and the sides burst asunder. We looked up then at each other, lost in surprise, delight, and admiration. We could not hear a word that was spoken; when in some

few seconds the diapason stop only was opened, and how sweet, how touching was the melody which it imparted!"

Tillysberg, two or three miles to the east of St. Florian's monastery, takes its name from the great little Austrian soldier to whom it was presented in 1623, by the Emperor in whose cause he had been "atrociously successful." The old castle which stood earlier on the site had for centuries been the property of warrior nobles, but Tilly demolished it, erecting (1630-32) in its place a large square building with four towers and as many windows as there are days in the year. The building was scarcely completed, when Tilly was mortally wounded, as we saw in an earlier chapter, in seeking to stay the victorious progress of Gustavus Adolphus, at a point some hundreds of miles further up the Danube. This great soldier and implacable foe of Protestantism was a remarkable person, described as follows by Schiller: "His strange and terrific aspect was in unison with his character. Of low stature, thin, with hollow cheeks, a long nose, a broad and wrinkled forehead, large whiskers and a pointed chin. He was generally attired in a Spanish doublet of green with slashed sleeves, with a small and peaked hat on his head, surmounted by a red feather, which hung down his back. His whole aspect recalled to recollection the Duke of Alva, the scourge of the Flemings, and his actions were by no means calculated to remove the impression."

There seems to have been something of vanity, or at least of the pride that apes humility, in the old soldier, for a French marshal, wishing to see the successful Austrian leader, met him attired much as in Schiller's description, mounted on a small grey horse, and armed with but a single pistol at his saddle-bow. When the new-comer saluted him, Tilly, observing his astonishment at finding him thus, said, "I perceive, Monsieur

le Maréchal, that you think my uniform rather extraordinary; I admit that it is not quite in conformity with the reigning fashion in Paris, but as it suits my own taste, I am satisfied. I see also that my charger and this single pistol in my holster are matter of surprise to you; but, that you may not retire with an unfavourable opinion of Count Tilly, whom you have had the curiosity to visit, I will only remind you that I have gained seven decisive victories, without being once obliged to draw the trigger of that pistol; and as for my little hackney, he has never once made a stumble under me, nor winced in the performance of his duty."

Mauthausen, which we were approaching when drawn off to these places seen away to the south, is a small and pleasant town, on the left bank, backed by hills in which are great rugged stone quarries. There is nothing more remarkable about the place than the legend that it owes its origin to the fact that in some mighty flood-time of the past, half of Aschach was carried away by the inundation, and floated down here, where it stranded and became known as Mauthausen.

Opposite the town the river Enns comes in, its greener waters being visible for some time before they finally blend with those of the Danube, and a little distance up it is the town of Enns, supposed to be on or near the site of an important Roman station. Like so many other of the places glanced at in a journey down the Danube, it has had a stormy history. Here in 791, Charlemagne is said to have encamped when, with an army moving along each bank of the Danube, and with a third one floating down the river, he started on a memorable punitive expedition against the Avars of Hungary. Again and again did Enns suffer in the conflict between the west and the barbarians. It was made a fortified town, say the chronicles, by Duke Leopold, who

paid for the work with the money which he had received as ransom for Richard Cœur de Lion. In the Middle Ages it was celebrated as having been one of the most famous fairs in Germany.

Among the legends of Enns, is one which declares that St. Peter preached the gospel here in the year 49, and another which describes St. Mark and St. Luke as converting the townspeople to the Christian faith. The latter legend was duly inscribed on the city walls in verses that also told how it was here that St. Florian was thrown in the river, and that Maximilian the bishop was "always gentle towards the poor." In the centre of the market place stands a tall detached tower erected by Maximilian the First, in the early part of the sixteenth century.

For several miles after the confluence of the Enns with the Danube, the journey continues among islands grown with willows and other water-loving vegetation, the river gradually nearing higher ground on the right, until the stream bends leftwards near where the modernized castle of Wallsee, white with red-tiled roofs, and a handsome clock-tower, rises handsomely among trees at the landing stage. The village is hidden from sight. Wallsee, where the Emperor of Austria stays, has extensive park-like lands on the same, right, bank of the river, while on the opposite side also are large pheasant preserves and hunting grounds. The castle—six or seven hundred years old—was bought by the Emperor a few years ago, and was then rebuilt. Close to the general landing place, is a special little chalet for the use of the Court.

For a time beyond Wallsee the scenery continues to be that afforded by willow-grown islands and low banks, but ahead are seen the mountains. Where the valley narrows and the hills are approached on our way to the town of Ardagger on the right, we pass one of the wire

“ferries,” by means of which the current is made to take a boat across from shore to shore. Here, it is said, the Emperor Conrad the Second landed in May, 1147, to complete arrangements for getting his great force through the Wachau defile, with its terrible “Strudel” and “Wirbel,” when setting out on his disastrous crusade. How great a proportion of his horde he had here is not reported, but when he marshalled it in the great plain of Hungary, says Gibbon, there were fifteen thousand knights and as many squires, “the flower of the German chivalry”; altogether sixty thousand horse and one hundred thousand foot; while “under the banners of Conrad, a troop of females rode in the attitude and armour of men, and the chief of these Amazons, from her gilt spurs and buskins, obtained the epithet of the golden footed dame.” On the heights above Ardagger is perched a pilgrimage church dedicated to St. Ottilia, one of the patron saints of shoemakers. When I first visited Grein a large band of pilgrims—most of the women wearing white head kerchiefs embroidered in colours—who had been visiting the shrine, went on board the steamer to return to their own neighbourhood some distance down the river.

When Ardagger is passed we soon find ourselves again between grand rocky hills, among scenery similarly beautiful to that of the Schlägen between Passau and Linz. Here is a signal station, from which the steamers learn if the tortuous channel through the mountains is clear, for the navigable route amid the whirling waters is so narrow that the regulations do not allow two vessels attempting to pass the “cataracts” together. As we pass between the steep beautifully wooded hills, the village of Grein, a collection of white houses showing among greenery and backed by blue hills, is seen ahead of us in an angle where the river, after going almost due north, bends eastward again. On an

abrupt rock, the Greinberg, to the left of the town is the large white "Schloss" of the Princes of Coburg-Gotha ; once, I believe, the property of Prince Albert.

Either Grein has changed since it came to be a river port of call for the steamers, and was reached by the railway, or else Planché when he visited the place must have been in a bad mood, for, in contrast with his usual enthusiasm, he dismisses the town in a few ungenial words : "Grein is one of the poorest and smallest towns in Upper Austria, and the château is a large, gloomy building, originally built by Heinrich von Chreine, in the twelfth century." To-day, Grein is known as "the pearl of the Danube." I found it a quiet but charming town most wonderfully situated between hills, with a splendid view both up and down-stream ; up between the wooded hills through which we have passed, and down towards those places of ancient dread—the Strudel and the Wirbel.

In autumn, when the wooded mountain sides have taken on the richly varied browns and golds of the passing leaves, this is a peculiarly beautiful bit of the river—and similar beauty continues in varying degree for the many miles that stretch from here almost to Vienna. Grein is a pleasant town, affording a capital "centre" for the holiday-maker.

For the pedestrian there are almost inexhaustible excursions on the mountains and up the Thals, through which cascading streams rush down to the Danube, or along the great river, while further points can be readily reached either by steamer or the railway which has recently been made along the north bank, linking its numerous towns and villages with Vienna and Linz. One of the quaintest things that struck me in Grein was when looking up a yard entrance I saw a fierce black dog, with tail erect, dragging at his chain as though straining for attack, only to find on closer examination

that dog, chain, and kennel, were all painted by some local Wiertz! A pleasing sight to a lover of birds—one especially noticeable about Grein, though fairly common throughout this district—is the many nest boxes fixed on poles and in trees about the gardens. Here, too, and all along this part of the river, quaint dove-cot-like summits to the chimneys impart a decided picturesqueness to those useful but too frequently ugly outlets.

Inland from Grein about three miles is Bad Kreuzen, a hydropathic establishment for summer visitors, beautifully situated. The castle of Kreutzen was a goodly stronghold in past times, and, like Neuhaus, was used, notably when, in the early part of the sixteenth century, the Turks were devastating Upper Austria, as a place of refuge for those driven from their homes by the advancing enemy.

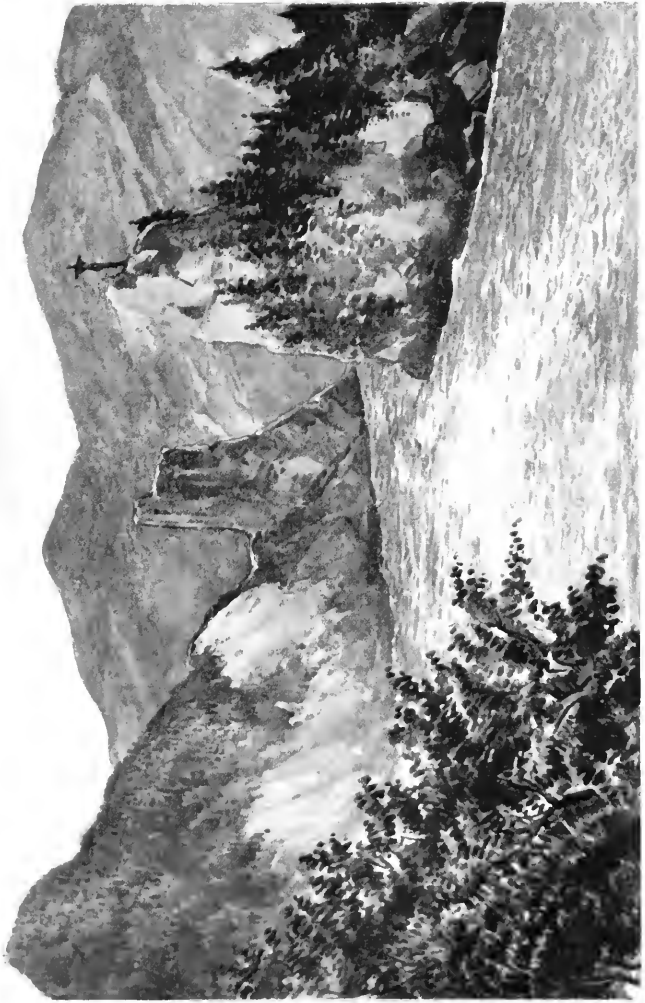
Passing down the Danube by the steamer affords a great variety of lovely scenery, but some parts of that scenery, beautiful as they are when seen in passing, are found to be far more beautiful when known with pedestrian intimacy. This applies particularly to where the river twists and winds among the mountains as through the Schlägen, and for the greater part of the way from Grein to Krems. A road, in the latter case, closely follows the windings of the stream, and in its turn is now closely neighboured by a railway which has been cut through rocks and mountain sides, and is carried by great stone embankments over the narrow valleys where many mountain brooks come down.

Just below Grein is a wild swirl of waters, the beginning of the "Greiner-schwall"; but even here, fearsome as the waters look, we may see a couple of girls navigating a heavy ferry boat, allowing the foaming water to take it onwards as they steer for the further bank. About a mile further down, and the channel is divided by the large island of Wörth, the main

stream to the left forming the Strudel. Where, to the right, a broad stream sweeps round between the end of the island and the wooded slopes of the Rabenstein at high water, at low water is to be seen nothing but a bed of white shingle.

Towards the further end of the island rises an abrupt rock, with some ruined remains of a castle surmounted by a large crucifix. Certainly the tempestuous waters seem formidable enough, but after the many lesser rapids passed in the downward journey, they prove less thrilling than some earlier writers have led us to expect. A steamer, too, perhaps imparts more confidence than would a smaller, frailer craft. Now, the high-perched crucifix does not appear to claim the attention which it did of old; though there must be much of the olden danger still to those who come down these rapids in small boats and on rafts.

Of the Strudel an earlier writer said: "In front and in the centre of the channel, rises an abrupt, isolated and colossal rock, fringed with wood, and crested with a mouldering tower, on the summit of which is planted a lofty cross, to which, in the moment of danger, the ancient boatmen were wont to address their prayers for deliverance. The first sight of this used to create no little excitement and apprehension on board; the master ordered strict silence to be observed—the steersman grasped the helm with a firmer hand—the passengers moved aside—so as to leave free space for the boatmen, while the women and children were hurried into the cabin, there to await with feelings of no little anxiety, the result of the enterprise. Every boatman, with his head uncovered, muttered a prayer to his favourite saint; and away dashed the barge through the tumbling breakers, that seemed as if hurrying it on to inevitable destruction. All these preparations, joined by the wildness of the adjacent scenery, the terrific aspects of



the rocks, and the tempestuous state of the water, were sufficient to produce a powerful sensation on the minds even of those who had been all their lives familiar with dangers; while the shadowy phantoms with which superstition had peopled it threw a deeper gloom over the whole scene." This account, though vivid, is scarcely accurate, for the cross-surmounted rock forms part of the island, and can thus scarcely be described as being in the centre of the channel; and "steersman" should surely be "steersmen." Timber rafts, as I have said, frequently have eight men steering at once, and the Danube passenger steamers when passing over such waters as this have as many as four men together at the doubled steering-wheel.

A romantic story attaches to the Wörth Cross, for it is said that a Tyrolese nobleman, journeying along the river in 1540, was wrecked in the Strudel, but succeeded in getting on to the island. He saw his wife swept away by the flood, and so set up as a hermit on the island, and there he remained until a dozen years later, when his wife—who had been rescued from the water some distance below the Strudel and not unnaturally concluded that he had perished—discovered him. The reunited couple commemorated their escape and their reunion, says the legend, by erecting the cross.

Many rocks, here and further down, have been blasted away to improve the navigation; and this has no doubt made the Strudel less dangerous to appearance as well as in reality. Rocks used to be visible at low water dividing the rapids into three, and these and the submerged rocks were all named by the boatmen. They have, however, been removed by modern engineering so that when the water is even low enough to leave the bed of the Hössgang, or right branch of the river bare, no Strudel rocks are visible. The Hössgang is said to have originated in a farmer's having cut an

irrigating channel into the low-lying land that now forms the island, and to have been enlarged by the force of the impetuous current.

A little below the Strudel is the Wirbel, which was at one time more dreaded as a "whirlpool" than the rapids we have just mentioned, but the improvement of the navigation has done away with the second of these twin terrors of the old-time boatmen and now we have to be told when we are passing the one-time place of dread, for the tower-crowned rock that divided the channel and formed the phenomenon was some years ago entirely cleared away. More than sixty years ago Dr. Beattie declared prophetically that "if the rock called Hausstein were blown up it is probable that this whirlpool would entirely disappear." How effectually this has been the case the present-day visitor acquainted with the old accounts of the terrible Wirbel will soon ascertain. Before dealing with the Wirbel it may be interesting to quote Planché's account of his passage of this part of the river, describing it as it was before the channel had been cleared :

"As soon as a bend of the river has shut out the view of Grein and its château, a mass of rock and castle scarcely distinguishable from each other, appears to rise in the middle of the stream before you. The flood roars and rushes round each side of it; and ere you can perceive which way the boat will take, it dashes down a slight fall to the left, struggles awhile with the waves, and then sweeps round between two crags, on which are the fragments of old square towers, with crucifixes planted before them. It has scarcely righted itself from this first shock, when it is borne rapidly forward towards an immense block of stone, on which stands a third tower, till now hidden by the others, and having at its foot a dangerous eddy. The boat flashes like lightning through the tossing waves, within a few

feet of the vortex, and comes immediately into still water, leaving the passenger who beholds this scene for the first time, mute with wonder and admiration. These are the Scylla and Charybdis of the Danube, the celebrated Strudel and Wirbel. The passage is made in little more than the time it takes to read the above brief description, and I could scarcely scratch down the outlines of these curious crags and ruins, before I was whirled to some distance beyond them."

The second of these phenomena was the Wirbel, more truly described, it would seem, as an eddy than as a whirlpool. About a thousand yards below the Strudel there used to rise from the channel towards the right bank a rocky islet known as the Hausstein, the stream rushing against this part of it going to the right through a narrow channel known as the Lüng, and the rest forming the Wirbel on the left. "This has the appearance of a series of foaming circles, each deepening as it approaches the centre, and caused by the two opposite streams rushing violently against each other. [The Hössgang branch comes in again to the main stream almost at right angles.] . . . The circle, within which the eddies perform their circumvolutions with amazing velocity, deepens as it approaches the centre, so as to form a basin nearly five feet in depth, and filling the neighbouring echoes with the increasing roar of its waters." It certainly must have been a hazardous business getting rafts and boats past the Wirbel, especially at times when the Lüng was not navigable owing to the lowness of the water, and it is not matter for surprise that there are many records of wrecks. The destruction of the Hausstein removed the cause of the disturbance, and the terrors of the Wirbel have become traditional.

A German writer in 1780 went so far, indeed, as to declare that then those terrors were much exaggerated:

“A great variety of circumstances concur to excite an idea of danger in both these parts of the Danube. Low mechanics are fond of speaking of them, and magnifying the danger, that they may increase their own importance in having gone through it. Others, more simple, who come to the place with strong conceits of what they are to meet with there, are so struck with the wildness of the prospect, and the roaring of the water that they begin to quake and tremble before they have seen anything. But the masters of the vessels are those who most effectually keep up the imposition. They make the passage a pretence for raising the price of the freight, and when you are past them the steersman goes round with his hat in his hand to collect money from the passengers as a reward for having conducted them safely through such perilous spots. When our master (who yet knew how very much it was for his interest to keep up the credit of his monsters) saw how little attention I paid to them, he assured me in confidence that during the twenty years he had sailed the Danube, he had not heard of a single accident.” That the “master” was going to the other extreme of exaggeration is shown by the fact that—besides fatalities in the Wirbel—two vessels had been wrecked on the sunken rocks of the Strudel only three years before that was written.

Many were the old methods of accounting for the Wirbel. A sixteenth-century cosmographer declared “they have often sounded in this place, but the abyss is so deep that they can touch no ground. It is bottomless. What falls therein, remains under and never comes up again.” This was the kind of marvel beloved in the olden, credulous times, and other marvels no less wonderful were associated with the Wirbel. One learned author declared that there was a hole in the river bed here which received the whirling waters that

after a long subterranean journey reached the great Hungarian lake known as the Plattensee, and in proof of the theory it was gravely asserted that some bold experimentalists had a vessel wrecked in the Wirbel—and in course of time a hammer that had belonged to a cooper on board was found (*floating*, says one account) in the Plattensee. The tradition of “unfathomable depth,” received a rude shock in the middle of the eighteenth century when a barge laden with pottery sank in the Wirbel, and the roof of the hut aboard remained visible!

Even as stories gathered about the whirlpool so did they around the neighbouring ruins, and especially in connexion with the towers that stood on the Hausstein, and a neighbouring rock—both of which have been done away with by the navigation improvements. It is not surprising that these various ruins—half a dozen within a mile or so—became the centres of legendary lore among the credulous peasantry. To quote from Dr. Beattie’s summary: “Each of these mouldering fortresses was the subject of some miraculous tradition, which circulated at every hearth. The sombre and mysterious aspect of the place—its wild scenery and the frequent accidents which occurred in the passage, invested it with awe and terror; but above all, the superstitions of the time, a belief in the marvellous, and the credulity of the boatmen, made the navigation of the Strudel and the Wirbel a theme of the wildest romance. At night, sounds that were heard far above the roar of the Danube issued from every ruin. Magical lights flashed through their loopholes, and casements—festivals were held in the long deserted halls—maskers glided from room to room—the waltzers maddened to the strains of an infernal orchestra—armed sentinels paraded the battlements; while at intervals the clash of arms, the neighing of steeds, and the shrieks of

unearthly combatants smote fitfully on the boatman's ear. But the tower in which these scenes were most fearfully enacted, was that on the Longstone, commonly called the Devil's Tower, as it well deserved to be—for here, in close communion with his master, resided the Black Monk, whose office it was to exhibit false lights and landmarks along the gulf, so as to decoy the vessels into the whirlpool, or dash them against the rocks. He was considerably annoyed in his quarters, however, on the arrival of the great Soliman in these regions; for to repel the turbanned host—or at least to check their triumphant progress to the Upper Danube—the inhabitants were summoned to join the national standard, and each to defend his own hearth. Fortifications were suddenly thrown up—even churches and other religious edifices were placed in a state of military defence; women and children, the aged and the sick were lodged in fortresses, and thus secured from the violence of the approaching Moslem. Among the other points at which the greatest efforts were made to check the enemy, the passage of the Strudel and Wirbel was rendered as impregnable as the time and circumstance of the case would allow. To supply material for the work, patriotism for a time got the better of superstition, and the said Devil's Tower was demolished and converted into a strong breastwork. Thus forcibly dislodged, the Black Monk is said to have pronounced a malediction on the intruders, and to have chosen a new haunt among the recesses of the Hartz mountains.

Another story associating the Evil One in the days of the Emperor Henry the Third, with this part of the river is told by John Aventinus, the sixteenth-century annalist of Bavaria: "The Emperor departed from Regensburg and came by water to Passau: there he tarried during the Passion week, and till the holy feast of the Ascension. The next day after which, he again

took water, and journeyed into lower Bavaria as Austria was then called. There is a town in Austria by name Grein; near this town is a perilous place in the Danube called the Strudel by Stockerau.* There doth one hear the water rushing far and wide, so falls it over the rocks with a great foam, which is very dangerous to pass through, and brings the vessel into a whirlpool rolling round about. The Emperor Henry went down through the Strudel; in another vessel was Bruno, Bishop of Wartzburg, the Emperor's kinsman, and as the Bishop was passing also through the Strudel, there sat upon a rock that projected out of the water, a man blacker than a Moor, of a horrible aspect, terrible to all who beheld it, who cried out and said to Bishop Bruno, 'Hear! Hear! Bishop! I am thine evil spirit! Thou art mine own, go where thou wilt, thou shalt be mine, yet now I will do nought to thee, but soon shalt thou see me again.' All who heard this were terrified. The bishop crossed and blessed himself, said a few prayers, and the spirit vanished. This rock is shewn to this day; upon it is built a small tower all of stone, without any wood: it has no roof, and is called the Devil's Tower." Thus far the credulous chronicler Aventinus. The tragic sequel to this demoniac threat we shall learn a little further down the Danube.

These waters, so long the terror and wonder of those who used the river, have, as I have indicated, been greatly tamed by the removal of the obstructing rocks, but there were not wanting people who regarded the dangers as greatly exaggerated. The German traveller, Riesbeck, did so, as we saw a little earlier, but the traditional dangers long sufficed as an excuse for

* This is no doubt a slip for Struden, as Stockerau lies far further down the river, about seventy miles nearer Vienna, on a branch of it some distance from the main stream.

dwellers on the bank, and boatmen, too, to secure "tips" from passengers journeying down the river. The custom still obtained when Planché took his trip, for he says that as soon as the Wirbel was passed a boat put off from the village of St. Nikola and paddled alongside, when a man held out a box bearing a figure of the saint, that a few coins might be dropped in as a thank-offering for saintly protection during the passage of the dangerous reach. On board the regular passage boats—the *Ordinari*—which preceded the steamers, too, money was collected by the steersmen as soon as the Wirbel was astern, "and another ceremony likewise takes place, something similar to that customary on board a ship when passing the Line. The steersman goes round with the wooden scoop or shovel with which they wet the ropes that bind the paddles to their uprights, filled with water; and those who have never before passed through the Strudel and the Wirbel must either pay or be well soused with the element, the perils of which they have just escaped." Was there no clamouring for compensation, no indignation at interfering with the vested interests of the tip-gathers, when the obstructing rocks were cleared away? At any rate, the passenger by steamer over these troubled but no longer terrible waters is not called upon for backshish or thank-offering. That the waters are troubled no one who passes over them will deny, for as the steamer passes over the Strudel we are—or imagine that we are—conscious of a distinct change in the level as we go over the "fall."

As even those who take a more or less hurried journey along the Danube should make a stay, however short, in this neighbourhood, I will take up the story of the shore from Grein. Leaving that pleasant town by the road cut along the foot of the cliff, we get, looking back from the opposite corner of the "bay" which the bending river here forms, a picturesque view of the

Coburg castle above the town, and the timber-grown hill to the left. The road is here cut along the very rock which in bold crags towers above our heads, while on the further side of the river are densely wooded hills. At the corner we are directly above the swirling waters of the Greiner-schwall, and after a pleasant walk of about a mile come opposite the western end of the Wörth island, with a capital view of the wooded rock surmounted by its cross, and on the left bank of the river the boldly perched ruins of the castle of Struden or Werfenstein. Before reaching these, however, we pass the opening of a narrow valley—the “Stillenstein Klamm,” which, before we have been long in Grein, is known to be one of the special view-places of the neighbourhood.

From this valley, beneath the high viaduct of the new railway which spans it just before it reaches the Danube, comes a small hurrying brook, the course of which should be followed by any lover of woodlands and water. Passing the mill that stands a little way up the valley, we may follow a path that keeps fairly close to the stream for two or three miles up to the very point where it emerges from beneath the Stillenstein itself—a great mass of rock, with a couple of pine trees growing on it, which has fallen at some immemorial period and got wedged between the opposite rocky sides of the valley. From the black cavern under this rock the stream emerges, at once as a cascade; and as an almost continuous series of cascades it continues all the way to the great river to which it adds its contribution. Here and there are pools in which many trout are to be seen “staying their wavy bodies against the stream.” The principal “fall” is where the water has got imprisoned between great rocks and falls over in a wedge-like shape, a mass of foaming white. The mountains rise steeply on either side as we pass up the

“Klamm,” clothed from the very water’s edge—their boughs almost intermingling above it in places—with beech and pine and other trees. About the great grey boulders of rock are a profusion of ferns and mosses: the whole is like the beauty of some Devonshire lane and stream raised to the *n*th—a kind of lyric loveliness that uplifts and gladdens, where the grandeur of the great river to which the stream is hurrying has something rather of epic sweep and solemnity.

Returning to the bank of the Danube we pass below the ruined castle and through the small village of Struden, the road narrowing considerably between quaintly picturesque houses. Beyond Struden we come abreast of the old Wirbel of many terrors, but the rock which formed it has gone, and a great gilt inscription on the face of the cliff above us is its chief memorial:—

“KAISER FRANZ JOSEF

befriete die Schiffahrt von den Gefahren im

DONAU—WIRBEL

durch Sprengung der Hausstein Isel

1853—1866.”

Beneath this inscription is a tiny chapel on the inner side walls of which are a couple of inscriptions concerning the clearing of the river channel; the one surmounted by a view of the Hausstein island, the other by a plan of this part of the river before the improvements were carried out. A little beyond we reach the village of St. Nikola, the slender tower of its church rising picturesquely above the roofs of its houses, set amid trees and backed by the wooded mountains. Here comes in another mountain stream inviting to inland excursion. It is not surprising to learn that this is a favourite centre for artists, seeing that it is not only beautiful in itself but a centre from which many other varied beauties are to be reached. In this walk along



ST. NIKOLA

the left bank, as one enthusiast has put it, the tourist may enjoy the scenery in all its perfection: "Castles, rocks, rapids, beetling precipices, romantic cliffs, and mountains, whose sweeping forests descend to the water's edge, present themselves to his eye under every variety of combination—often compelling him to halt till he has paid again and again his tribute of admiration."

The next place to be reached is the long and straggling village of Sarmingstein, with on a rock above it the ruins of a round watch-tower—all that is left of a one-time important castle that was long maintained as a refuge for non-combatants in time of war. The prosperous village seems chiefly given over to the timber and granite cutting industries, and here, as the steamer goes down the river, we may see the large, long barges being loaded with planks, the work being done by women. Some of the mountain sides here are entirely denuded of their timber; the tree trunks being slid down the steep slopes to the river-side. Through part of Sarmingstein the road narrows again closely between the houses as at Struden. Probably this was done owing to the scantiness of the land between the mountain side and the river, or it may have been to make it less easy for the passage of an enemy in the old and troubled times. One of the worst of the "high-water marks" which are seen ever and again in Danube-side towns and villages is placed against the side of a house in Sarmingstein, about twelve feet above the pavement. A number of houses are to be noticed along these river-side places without any living-rooms on the ground floor, this being doubtless a precaution against floods.

The long street which forms the village of Sarmingstein runs at the foot of a beech-clothed mountain, on which are pleasant paths with seats at intervals, from

which may be had lovely views over the roofs of the place to the intensely green river. Among the wealth of wild flowers I was especially struck here by the beautiful cyclamen. Near the further end of Sarmingstein are timber mills worked by the Sarmingbach, which here cascades down through a narrow valley in a manner somewhat similar to that of the stream that rushes down from the Stillenstein. The roadway that is cut up through the woods on the mountain side on the left bank of this small tributary of the Danube zig-zags about like the approaches to a Swiss pass. This beautiful village has found an enthusiastic panegyrist in Herr Carl Julius Weber.

Between Grein and Sarmingstein the villages are all on the left bank, on the right there being but occasional cottages, sometimes perched high on grassy patches among the woodland like Alpine chalets. Little more than a mile further down stream is the pretty hamlet of Hirschenau on the left bank and on the opposite side the lofty ruins of Freyenstein, at one time one of the largest and most powerful of Austrian castles. Still between wooden hills we pass, with here and there small hamlets visible. At Isperdorf there appears nothing but a mere landing stage at the foot of a rocky pine-clad hill. The village of Isperdorf, where Charlemagne conquered Duke Thassilo of Bavaria in 787, is on the further side of the river Isper, which comes in from the north. This stream marks the boundary between Upper and Lower Austria on the left bank. Here the valley widens out as the Danube hastens to its confluence with the Ybbs, and soon we see the white castle or chateau of Persenbeug standing boldly on a rock by the water's edge on the left. The town of Persenbeug lies further along, and is scattered somewhat over the flat peninsula round which the Danube here makes a sharp bend to the southwards; the road and the railway both



SARMINGSTEIN

cross the northern end of this peninsula, from which Persenbeug takes its name, corrupted from Bösenbeug, signifying a dangerous bend in the river, of which this might be regarded as the beginning.

The Schloss Persenbeug, though much renewed, and looking modern in its creamy whiteness, represents one of the oldest buildings in Lower Austria. It was at one time a summer residence of the Austrian Emperors, and is associated with the story of the Devil and the Bishop the first part of which was enacted in the neighbourhood of the Strudel and Wirbel. To continue that story in the words of the old chronicler before quoted, after describing the passing of the Devil's Tower he goes on, "Not far from thence, some two miles' journey,* the Emperor and his people landed, proposing to pass the night in a town called Pösenbeiss, belonging to the Lady Richlita, widow of the Count Adalbero von Ebersberg. She received the Emperor joyfully; invited him to a banquet, and prayed him, besides, that he would bestow the town of Pösenbeiss and other surrounding places (that her husband had possessed and governed) on her brother's son Welforic the Third. The Emperor entered the banquet room, and standing near Bishop Bruno, Count Aleman von Ebersberg and the Lady Richlita, gave the Countess his right hand and granted her prayer. At that moment the floor of the apartment fell in, and the Emperor fell through into the bathing chamber below it, without sustaining any injury, as did also Count Aleman, and the Lady Richlita, but the Bishop fell on the edge of the bathing tub, broke his ribs and died a few days afterwards. Another account says that others, including Lady Richlita, were also killed. This tragic incident, it is suggested by Planché, was really brought about by the machinations of the monks of Kremsmünster who laid claim to the castle and estates.

* It is about eight English miles.

They did not, however, succeed in getting possession of them, and Persenbeug had been successively the property of several nobles before, at the beginning of the last century, it was repurchased by the Emperor of Austria.

A little lower down stream, on one of the arms through which the river of the same name reaches the Danube, is the attractive old town of Ybbs—its red-roofed houses dominated by a spired church and backed by low green hills. From the outlook point of "Kirl" is to be obtained a grand view of the Danube, and, away to the south, of the Austrian Alps and the lofty Schneeberg. A little beyond Ybbs the Linz-Vienna railway approaches close to the river and keeps near it for some distance. Having passed round the southern point of the Persenbeug peninsula—on which and on the further bank tall chimneys denote modern manufacturing activity—we go by the ruins of a Cistercian monastery at Säussenstein (on the right bank). Säussenstein takes its name from the rushing of the waters of the "Charybdis" which swirls round its base. Before the river turns eastward again, on the summit of a hill ahead of us are seen the twin towers of a church.

This is the pilgrimage church of Maria-Taferl, some distance inland from Marbach, which pleasant little town seems chiefly to exist as a point of approach for the place of pilgrimage. In something under an hour's walk, the last part of it up a broad hill-side avenue, the roadway of which is formed into wide steps, we may reach Maria-Taferl—and if the atmosphere be suitable may have a widely extensive view in both directions of the "Imperial Danube's rich domain" and of the distant Austrian and Styrian Alps. The view is, indeed, said to extend for a hundred miles, from Hungary to Bavaria. When I climbed it lowering rain clouds cut off all but the nearer view of the river. The village that has sprung up

around the pilgrimage church is like nothing so much as a huge bazaar for the sale of souvenirs and picture post-cards to pious pilgrims and curious visitors. On special occasions—particularly in September—it is a point to which large crowds of devotees converge. It is said that as many as one hundred and fifty thousand pilgrims have visited the shrine in a single year; some of them perhaps inspired by the promise of the distich which runs—

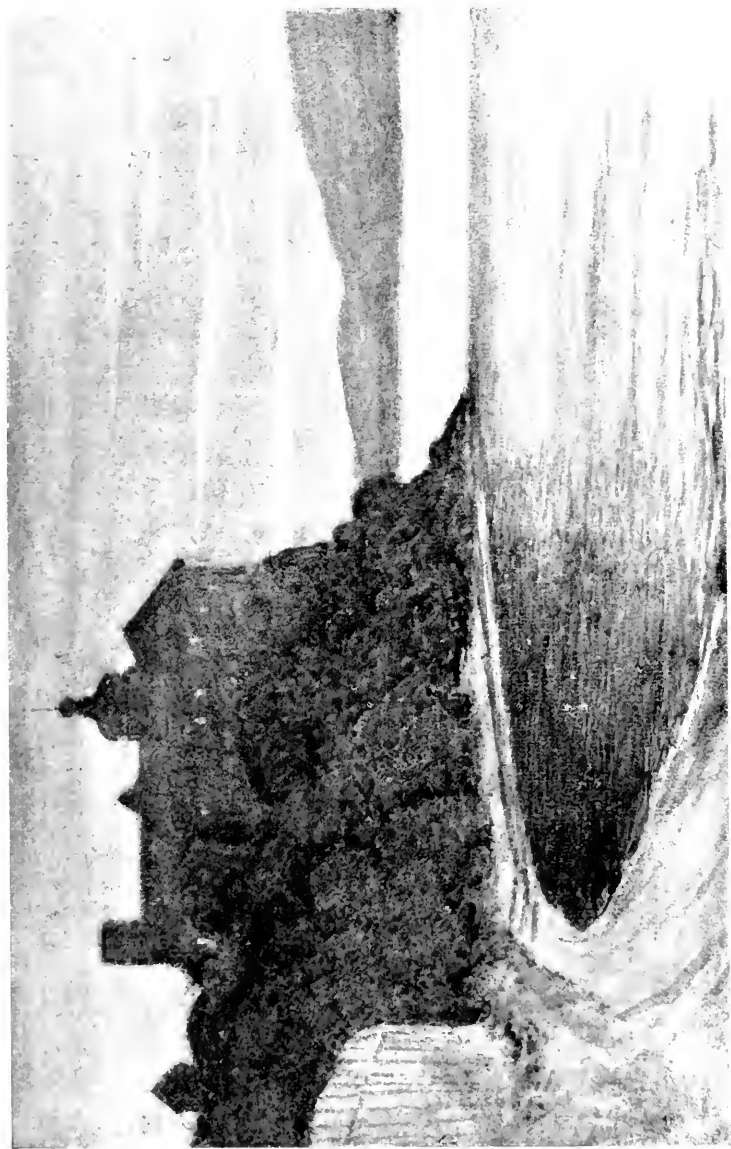
“Wer nach Maria Taferl ein Wallfahrt maken thut
Diess ihm Maria Taferl macht aller wiedergut.”
 (“Who to Maria Taferl a pilgrimage takes
To him Maria Taferl all good again makes.”)

This church—about eight hundred feet above the river level—was erected in consequence of the miracles worked by an image of the Virgin which used to be fixed to an old oak tree on the hill-side. At this tree the peasantry were wont at Easter to offer up their prayers for a goodly harvest, and at its foot they would have their feasting at a big stone table (*taferl* or *taferl*). When the tree had fallen into decay a peasant, in 1662, sought to cut it down, but the axe, though aimed at the trunk, struck the would-be woodsman's own foot. Looking up, the peasant saw the image and was instantly struck with contrition, and his penitent prayers were answered by the instant and miraculous curing of the newly inflicted wound. The news was soon bruited abroad and the fame of the image increased thereby.

Ten years later another man, suffering from a black melancholy, was directed by a vision to go to the house of a schoolmaster in which he would find an image of the Virgin. This he bought and carried home. In the middle of the night he heard a voice saying, “If thou wouldst be cured take the image and place it in the oak

at Maria-Taferl!" The melancholy one as soon as daylight came did this, replacing the old image with his new one; and in the instant he had his reward, his melancholy passing completely away. But it was not only these two miracles that established the fame of Maria-Taferl, for within a few years, on five several occasions—and sometimes by as many as forty persons—angels were seen about the sacred spot! Small wonder that the place became a famous centre for pilgrims. In the many bazaar-like booths pictures of the miraculous happenings and other relics are sold, while on occasions of special pilgrimage the whole village that has grown up by the chapel is decorated with bunting and greenery. The way-marks, the shops in Marbach, the large new refreshment establishment near the station, all indicate the extent to which this quiet old river-side place depends upon the periodical influx of pilgrims bound for the twin-spired chapel, which is seen inland over the near hill-top.

A short distance further along the Danube, where the Erlaf flows in on the right, stands the old town of Pöchlarn, once large and famous, now small, with slender-spired church, some quaint buildings, a curious fountain, and other links with the past, but nothing beyond tradition connecting it with the "Nibelungenlied." We saw earlier how Kriemhilda reached the Danube, was welcomed at Passau, and set out on the later stages of her lengthy journey to her new husband and her new kingdom. Pöchlarn was an important point on that journey, for it was here lived one of those most intimately connected with her story. This was that Rüdiger of Bechlaren (Pöchlarn) who set out for the Rhineland to woo Kreimhilda on behalf of King Etzel. Rüdiger paused at Pöchlarn on his journey from Gran to the west, and there feasted the grand company that attended him on his embassy. When he



PERSEBEUG



returned with the beautiful bride whom he had won for his king, Rüdiger's town gave that lady a wonderful reception. The Margrave's wife rode forth some distance to welcome her husband and the great cavalcade, which rested at some distance before making fitting entry into Pöchlarn.

"That night they slept in quiet until the dawning brake.
But they of Bechelaren themselves did ready make,
So that they might provide for so many a worthy guest.
Well Rüdiger had managed that little should be missed.

One saw how every window stood open in the wall :
The castle of Bechlaren was entry free to all.
Therein the guests came riding, well seen of all around.
The noble host had bidden good hostel to be found.

Then Rüdiger's fair daughter with all her company,
Unto the queen approaching, received her lovingly.
There likewise was her mother, the wife of the margrave.
To many a young damsel they kindly greeting gave.

Hands took they with each other, and so together went
Unto a wide roomed palace of fashion excellent,
For there beneath it rushing, one saw the Danube's flood.
They sat and took the breezes, and had much pastime good."

There was further feasting in the castle of Pöchlarn, when Rüdiger, a few years later, welcomed King Gunther and his Burgundians on their fateful visit to King Etzel's Court. Surely he deserved the tribute paid to him by Eckewart in the "Lied."

"A host to you I'll show :

And such a one ne'er bade you into his house to go,
In any land whatever, as ye may meet with here
If ye, good thanes, are willing to visit Rüdiger.

He dwells hard by the highway : of hosts he is the best
That ever had a rooftree. His heart is aye possesst
Of kindness, as of flowers are meadows in sweet May ;
If he can succour heroes, glad will he be the day."

Of Rüdiger's castle nothing now remains, but the town where that best of hosts could provide emergency entertainment for ten thousand visitors—as is recorded in one stanza of the "Lied"—may well be proud of its association with the great epic of the North. Planché, it may be said, gives a highly coloured account of Kreimhilda's coming down the river by boat—a vision which is scarcely supported by the text of the "Nibelungenlied."

Opposite to the famous Pöchlarn is a pleasant little village of the same name, known as Klein Pöchlarn, with further tall chimney shafts suggesting that this widened Danube valley is becoming a manufacturing centre. The right bank along here is low, but the hills approach close to the river on the left, and soon ahead of us is seen the ruined castle of Weitenegg, at which point we may perhaps best begin the story and description of the Wachau.

CHAPTER VI

THE WACHAU

“ ’Mid castled crags and swirling stream,
’Mid green-clad vineyard hills,
Where History and Legend dream,
My heart with beauty thrills.”

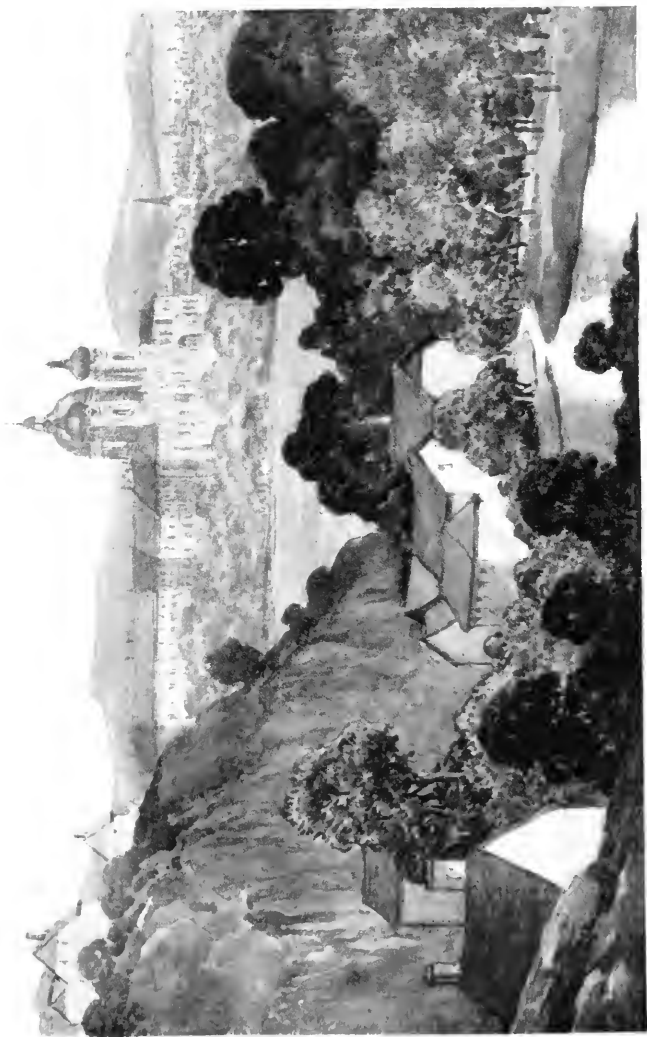
From the German

THE Wachau has come to be regarded as one of the show places of the Danube, and very beautiful it is, with its narrow gorge through which the great river finds its way, its wooded mountains, its crag-perched ruins, its quaint old towns and villages, and its numerous vineyards lining the rocky mountain-sides. It was “discovered” not many years since by one Augustin Weigl, and its accessibility from Vienna has served to make it the most popular portion of the beautiful river. Many as are its attractions, there are stretches further up the river—notably that from Grein to Persenbeug—that can vie with it in attractiveness, and there are moods in which the last portion of the river in Hungary may be far more impressive. Such comparisons are, however, invidious, and those who explore the “schöne, herrliche Wachau” can easily extend their explorings, either afoot or by the new railway, to the Grein district.

The ruins that show boldly on a cliff indicate how well the builders of these old strongholds selected their sites. For Weitenegg was built on a point of the rocky hills where the broad Danube runs along one side, and

the Weitenbach runs parallel with it before joining it at the end of the narrow strip on the highest point of which the castle is situated. Thus the old-time owners of the place, in the days when every noble was liable at any time to find himself at enmity with his neighbours, were more or less secure from attack except from the narrow neck joining their narrow hill on to the high one on the west. Now there is little to suggest those days of old-time struggle, and climbing about the ruins we look down on the village, little more than a single row of houses at the foot of the cliff, with wooded "rolling" ground on the further side of the river backed by distant mountains. Behind us are the beautiful hills from which the Weitenbach comes down; hills about which we may find, even in the autumn, many of the flowers of our gardens growing wild—sweet-williams, Michaelmas daisies, and campanulas, while the cyclamen and Virgin Mary's cowslip plants suggest that earlier in the year this must also be a delightful district for the lover of flowers.

From the road up the hill immediately behind the ruins is to be had a beautiful glimpse across the valley opening and over the Danube to the handsome buildings of the magnificent monastery of M \ddot{o} lk, a little further down the river. The Castle of Weitenegg must have been a fairly extensive place at one time, having presumably been added to considerably since it was originally erected, as it is supposed, by that R \ddot{u} deger of whom we hear so much in the story of P \ddot{o} chlarn. Judging by the extent of the remains that are left, the size of the rooms and halls, now weed-grown skeletons, it must have been very large; and despite the tradition as to its age, there appear to have been considerable additions in more modern times. Many of the window spaces form a modern "note," suggesting that they were added no earlier than the late seventeenth century.



MOOK

The lower portions are largely of stone, the native rock largely worked into it, though there is also a goodly proportion of seemingly more or less modern red brick.

But for its ruins and its lovely inland walks, the little village of Weitenegg has nothing to attract the visitor. A short distance further down stream a cable ferry connects this left bank with the right, and so takes us to M \ddot{o} lk, largely hidden by a tree-grown island. The small town of M \ddot{o} lk is at the foot of the abrupt rock on which the grand monastery buildings have been erected with a fine eye to effect. The steamer landing place is a little below the monastery which, seen from the river, might be a magnificent palace. This splendid "Kloster" has been described by Dibdin as "one of the noblest edifices in the world." The Bibliographical Tourist went on, indeed, to declare that, "Christ Church College at Oxford, and Trinity College at Cambridge shall hardly together eclipse it; while no single portion of either can bear the least comparison with its cupola-crowned church, and the sweeping range of chambers which runs parallel with the town."

Though on the site of an older establishment, the place, which arouses every visitor to enthusiasm—"the Escorial of Germany" it has been named—was designed and erected in the eighteenth century—that period so often decried for its architectural achievements. It was built during the first third of that century by an architect named Prandauer. Not much of the early history of the place is known, though tradition tells of the burial at M \ddot{o} lk of a Scottish saint who, bound on a pilgrimage to Palestine in 1012 was mistaken for a spy when passing through this neighbourhood and promptly hanged. Presumably his saintliness was revealed (as in so many instances) posthumously.

In the seventeenth century M \ddot{o} lk was twice besieged,

once by the Turks when they swept through a large part of Austria. It was, however, an earlier building that was thus put to warlike uses ; possibly it was in consequence of damage done by the besieging Turks in 1684 that the monastery was rebuilt in the early part of the following century. Here in 1805 Napoleon made a short stay in his victorious advance on Vienna and here he stayed also in 1809. In one of the apartments a mark on the floor used to be shown as having been made by the Emperor in a moment of passion.

The two centres of greatest interest in this most magnificent of the Benedictine foundations along the Danube are the church and the library. The former is a lofty and richly decorated building "the very perfection of ecclesiastical Roman architecture," with a wonderful wealth of gold in its decoration. The library, which is noted for containing a large number of biblical and manuscript rarities, is a grand lofty room about a hundred feet in length, with a handsomely painted ceiling, and also no small measure of gilding in its scheme of decoration. Of the great wine "caves" or cellars, which apparently formed one of the features on which the old-time monks prided themselves, it is said that in some of them a carriage might be turned with ease. A French writer a few years after the campaign of 1805 said "in order to have an idea of the abundance which reigns here, it may be sufficient merely to observe, that for four successive days, during the march of the French troops through M \ddot{o} lk towards Vienna, there were delivered to them not less than from fifty to sixty thousand pints of wine per day—and yet scarcely one-half of the stock was exhausted. The French generals were lodged here on that momentous occasion and no doubt found it "snug lying in the abbey."

Splendid as the monastery appears when seen from the water and from the left bank, its situation was well

chosen for the views it affords of the wooded heights across the river and for the beautiful prospect to be had from its gallery over the tree-grown islets up the river to where Weitenegg stands on its rocky promontory backed by the green woodlands of the higher hills, with the mountains in the distance.

A little below MÖlk on the left bank is the small town of Emmersdorf, another one-time robber stronghold, and on the opposite side where the river Bielach comes in is, I believe, technically the beginning of the Wachau—the gorge through which the Danube finds its way to the plain on which Vienna stands. The whole of this tract is said to have been given by Charlemagne to the Bishop of Passau. There is much to delight the visitor who has time to linger about this vineyard district of the river, much variety in the way of mountain and rocky scenery, many fascinating old villages, towns and ruins.

For the most part the places of chief importance, the places most promising as centres in which to stay, are on the left bank—though, as will be seen, there are exceptions. Indeed, the very first object that arrests attention is on the right, where the rocky hills are once more close to the water-side. This is the castle of Schönbühel—a white-towered building standing on a massy rock at the very point where the valley narrows between the hills. Schönbühel, unlike so many of the Danubian castles, is still inhabited. The slender tower gives a singular appearance to the rock-perched group of buildings, and it is without surprise that we learn that this romantically placed château has its ghost, and even—according to one story—a more sinister visitant in the person of Lucifer himself.

The ghost—I am not quite clear whether of the murderer or of the murdered—haunts the place in consequence of a horrid crime said to have been

perpetrated by an old-time owner of the place who, believing his wife to be guilty of some offence, killed her, apparently without any inquiry into the matter of her supposed crime. The story has been rendered into ballad form, and the following stanzas indicate the nature of the tragedy :

“ The blood still reddens the mouldering oak,
 Where, clasping the blessed rood,
 And bowing her neck to the headsman’s stroke,
 Fair Cunigonda stood.

‘ I know not the crime for which I die,
 My cruel lord,’ said she,
 ‘ But my cause I leave to God on high—
 My untimely death to thee !’

Down fell the axe—the life-blood streamed :
 But long ere morning prime,
 Through the baron’s hall a maniac screamed—
 ‘ She was guiltless of the crime !’ ”

Beyond the chapel—with its model of Bethlehem—are the mountain-sides, close-grown with maple, oak and other trees. All through the Wachau, roads may be followed close neighbouring the river along either bank—that on the left offering the greatest variety of places to be visited, that on the right passing for the most part through wilder scenery, but both affording ever-changing picturesque views.

Entering the narrowed valley, we soon see ahead of us, high on the rocky cliff and backed by dark trees, another of those common objects of this great river—a ruined castle. Shortly before reaching it, however, we have on the left the small market town of Aggsbach. A little place, more picturesque from the river than when entered in the dusk after long walking on a day of heavy rain, when its narrow ways are deep in mud and an eligible gasthaus seems difficult to find. Though



AGGSTEIN



a market town by description, it is to appearance but a small, quiet village. A river-side inn with external steps and deep stone balcony has quite an Oriental appearance. Klein Aggsbach, on the right bank shows that, comparatively, this town is not to be regarded as small. A place of call for the steamers, Aggsbach is the port of debarkation for those who would visit the dominating ruins ahead, which may be reached by ferry from a point somewhat further down stream.

The dominating ruins are those of Aggstein—once a dreaded name on the Danube, for the lordly owners of this castle were famous, even among the many robber knights of the river, for their pertinacity in preying upon travellers. Approached from either down or up-stream, Aggstein, perched on the summit of a thickly wooded hill about six hundred feet above the water, and backed by higher hills, also densely timbered, is strikingly impressive, while from its extensive ruins is to be obtained a view that for beauty will vie with any of those we have seen.

The ruins, which are attained by paths up through the wood, form—and justly—one of the most celebrated bits on the river; and it is only fitting that to such a place should be attached romantic and grim stories. The place must have been veritably impregnable in the days when its owners lorded it over this stretch of the Danube and took their toll of all passing boats. If all the strongholds of robber knights were “flourishing” contemporaneously, it is wonderful how any boat ever completed its journey.

Two at least of the lords of Aggstein seem to have come to a well-deserved end. One of these, Schreckenwald, who flourished in the fifteenth century is proverbially immortalized in an Austrian saying which describes those who are in a hopeless plight as being “in Schreckenwald’s rose-garden.”

The worthy whose name is thus remembered is said to have been not only the most expert but also the most unscrupulous robber knight of his day, and to have been the terror of the surrounding country. When he had despoiled his prisoners of all that they possessed he would have them brought into his presence and dropped through a trap-door into what he playfully termed his "rose garden." This was a dungeon, or enclosed ravine in the rock on which the castle was built, and those who were not killed by the fall were left to die of starvation or cold. How many victims he thus murdered is not recorded, but they are said to have been many—and of the number dropped into the "rose garden" but one escaped. A youthful knight of the neighbourhood, having been dismounted in a skirmish with some of Schreckenwald's henchmen, was borne to the castle before the robber tyrant. It is said that to Schreckenwald's enmity towards any captive was, in this case, added jealousy, for the knight had won favour in the eyes of a lady who had rejected the baron's advances; the young man was therefore promptly sentenced to the "rose garden," and the sentence as promptly carried out.

Conscious of a good deed accomplished in the removal of a rival, and grateful to his retainers, the baron gave up that day and the next to an orgy. At the close of the second day the inhabitants of the castle, deeming themselves in their usual state of security, retired to rest that they might be ready to start on some fresh foray in the morning. They little knew that retribution was nigh. Suddenly the blaring of bugles and the clashing of arms sounded, and the astonished baron found himself confronted in the torch-light by what he imagined must be the apparition of his latest victim. For a moment he was dumbfounded, but only for a moment; rushing forward sword in hand

he shouted, "Wert thou the Archfiend himself, Schreckenwald shall still be lord of Aggstein." The ferocity of despair availed him not; he was disarmed and promptly hanged in his own entrance hall, while his robber band of retainers was destroyed, some of the men being killed in the fighting and others driven over the battlements to destruction on the rocks below.

Another baron, seemingly a worthy predecessor of Schreckenwald, was Hadmar the "Hound of Kuenring," who in the early part of the thirteenth century was lord of Aggstein (and of Durrenstein also). This robber-chief, in alliance with his brother, made Aggstein terrible, ravaging the country round, and being in all ways a law unto themselves. They became known as "The Hounds," and long successfully defied all efforts to subdue them. At length, in 1231, a merchant who had already suffered much at the hands of the robbers, proposed to the Emperor that he should be permitted to employ a trick. "I will freight," said he, "a vessel at Ratisbon, laden with the most costly merchandise: the tidings will soon reach the robbers at Aggstein. Thirty stout knights shall lie concealed in the vessel, and when Hadmar rushes down from his castle, and boards us with a few of his vassals, thinking to plunder some peaceable merchants, the knights shall rush out upon, and overpower him, while I push off from the shore." Force having failed, the Emperor was quite willing that the stratagem should be tried, and the merchant duly set out as arranged. "Long before he had passed the Strudel, however, the welcome news of a very rich prize being on the water was told in the castle of Aggstein; and no sooner was the barge in sight, than the tower-bell, as usual, proclaimed the approach of booty. The baron, attended by a few choice vassals, pounced at once upon the expected prey, and was received on board with tokens of the

most abject submission. 'What is thy cargo, knave?' said he to the merchant. 'Silk, brocade, and wine,' answered the merchant—'with,' but here he hesitated. 'With what?' interposed the baron sternly; 'speak on thy life!' 'With a cask or two of specie for the Duke's treasury,' said the merchant in a half whisper. '*Specie!* the very thing we want,' roared the baron. 'Hand up the metal, instantly.' 'The *metal* for the baron—instantly!' cried the merchant, and suddenly throwing back the canvas, thirty glittering lances were levelled at the baron's breast. 'There is thy metal, Herr Baron,' said the skipper, pointing to the thirty mailed warriors who instantly surrounded him and his suite. The surprise and consternation of the tyrant may be imagined, but cannot be described. He was immediately secured and committed to the hold; and never did barge anchor under the walls of Vienna with more welcome news than when it was noised abroad that the Robber-Chief, Hadmar of Aggstein, was a prisoner on board."

From the lofty ruins with their sinister memories we pass on through the continuously beautiful Wachau with its steep, wooded mountains on the right, its lower hills on the left, on the sides of which many vineyards soon become familiar. Several small villages are passed, and beyond Schwallenbach on the left we see an extraordinary piece of rocky formation running in wall-like fashion down the face of a hill-side to the river. Softer rock has been worn away until the ridge remains very much like a roughly made wall built of irregular-sized blocks of stone—like one of our west-country stone field-walls exaggerated to a gigantic extent. It is little wonder that local lore has ascribed to this ridge a demoniac origin. It is known as the Teufelsmauer, or Devil's Wall, but why the Devil concerned himself in erecting it I have not been able to ascertain further



THE DEVIL'S WALL.

than the suggestion that he had taken it into his head to block up the Danube at this spot, but by some special intervention of Providence was stopped before the undertaking had got beyond the building of this wall. Where, for the new railway, a path has been blasted along the rock here, the lower end of the wall has been left intact by tunnelling through it. The first stopping place for the steamer after leaving Aggsbach is Spitz, a small town lying about the foot of a conical hill, scored to the top with vineyard lines, with vineyards extending also up the neighbouring hills, while on the mountain-side above it are the picturesque ruins of an old castle.

Spitz is regarded as the most important centre of the Wachau wine district, and so closely is every available piece of ground utilized, that a local saying has it that the town is one in which the wine grows in the market place. The grape is not the only fruit grown here, for there are also many peach orchards, and quantities of this fruit are taken aboard before the boat continues its journey Vienna-wards. All along here the vineyards offer many pleasant pictures to the pedestrian who loiters about in October when the grape harvest is being gathered. From the narrow terraces on which the vines are grown along the steep hillsides barefooted men and women, boys and girls, are to be seen descending with long pottle-shaped wooden baskets on their backs, piled high with fruit. Many times, too, great vats stand by the road-side at the foot of the vineyard, into which the grapes are turned, and where they are pounded and squashed with great wooden clubs. Then a couple of oxen will come slowly along drawing a large barrel on a cart frame, and into this barrel a man "spoons" the juice from the great tub, much as our farm hands in country districts fill their water-carts from a pond.

Spitz is a beautifully situated little town, with a pleasant market place dominated by a square church tower with steep wedge-shaped roof of many-coloured tiles. On the opposite side of the river is one of the Arnsdorfs—a cluster of houses about a steep-roofed church—half a dozen striking poplars and the wooded hills beyond. The Spitz castle ruins upon the bare dark rock are among the most picturesque of those we see, and represent an ancient place that belonged at one time to those great territorial magnates the bishops of Passau and at another time to some of those robber knights whose fastnesses were dotted with what must have been disquieting frequency along the course of the Danube.

Beyond Spitz—about which it has opened out somewhat—the valley again contracts, and the road on the left is cut through rugged rock, which in places almost overhangs the way. Looking back we have a beautiful view of Spitz, the light green of its surrounding vineyards contrasting strikingly with the rock, the mountains and forests and the broad sweep of the green Danube, as seen under a cloudy sky with brilliant sunshine following on a heavy shower. A little beyond and we reach the small village of St. Michael with its old church, along the roof ridge of which are placed seven hares, to commemorate—so the local story runs—a time when the snowfall in the neighbourhood had been so heavy that the hares were seen playing on the church roof! The animal figures are as like deer, cows or horses as they are to hares! The open-topped square tower of this old Gothic church is notable as being quite unlike any other that we see in the neighbourhood.

Another story of this district, and of only little more than a hundred years ago, seems rather an incident of the Middle Ages than of the closing years of the eighteenth century. It is said that a poor lonely old woman had got the reputation among her neighbours of



SPITZ VINEYARDS



being a witch and, therefore, when she was feeding her goat upon a hill-side she was shot with a glass bullet ; a severe thunderstorm which had arisen having been caused by her, according to the belief of her superstitious murderers.

The next point of special interest along this lovely bit of the river is Weissenkirchen, the villages of Wösendorf and Joching, with their orchards and vineyards, being pleasant little places without any special feature to call for a halt. Weissenkirchen, however, is a place that certainly does call for a halt owing to that which it has to show in itself and as being situated where the valley has widened somewhat at one of the most beautiful points in the Wachau.

Here, too, the vineyards penetrate close to the town, even further into it than they do at Spitz, for a low-sunk patch lies between the street by which the town is entered from the east and the railway station, the narrow paths or flights of steps that lead up from between the houses here and there lead us, too, inevitably into vineyards. On one side of the town the steep shingle-covered roofs of the houses are close to the vineyard terraces above. The large church which stands on the rock above the houses—its entrance on a level with their roofs—is approached by a long covered-in flight of steps from the corner of the market place. Near the foot of this stairway is a quaint figure of St. John, with a red painted metal canopy like a great umbrella close over the figure's head.

The characteristic wedge-roofed tower with its clock-faces near the south-west angle forms a strikingly picturesque object as seen from many points, especially from some of the narrow by-ways. Then, too, there are glimpses to be had into cellars, with their great wine presses with oak beams that, it is said, have done duty for three or four hundred years, and some wonderful old

court-yards—the finest being the old tilting-yard at the north-western corner of the market place—entering which we are at once taken to a past of centuries ago. It is a quadrangle of old buildings with deep, arched embrasures on the ground floor, and above, with smaller arches, a balcony, from which presumably “in days of old when knights were bold and barons held the sway” fair ladies looked down and encouraged the contestants below. Now more or less used as a store-yard for fuel and other things the “Turnierhof” or Tilting-yard is yet a place to be visited; and if it be as a German writer has it, that Weissenkirchen is a Mecca for artists, then we may well believe that this yard is for many of them the central shrine.

There are many delightful places within easy reach of the little town, and from the vineyards above a bird's-eye view of the whole is to be had that is likely to be unforgettable if seen as I first saw it when, looking across it to the great river, the white mists of morning were clearing off and stretching like a silver girdle about the mountains on the further side.

Beyond Weissenkirchen, the Danube takes a southerly turn round abrupt, bare and sometimes precipitous rocks. On the right is soon seen a flat valley with the roofs of Rossatz; and directly ahead stands, from the sheer escarpment of the rock as it were, one of the places which most nearly in its traditions touches our English history, though even its name may not be known to any large proportion of those familiar with some details of the story it has to tell. This is Dürnstein or Dürrenstein, a small town between the face of the rocky cliffs and the river, with above it, striking from any point of view, the time-battered ruins of the castle in which it is said Richard Cœur de Lion passed fifteen months of weary imprisonment during the years 1192-4.



WEISSENKIRCHEN

Seen as we approach Dürrenstein down the river, the view is singularly fine. To the left of the town is a sheer mass of precipitous rock of all tones of yellow, where the cliff has been split away to cut the railroad. The crows wheeling about its jagged edge "show scarce so gross as beetles." From the group of old red-and-white buildings other jagged lines of rock and wall slant upwards, leading the eye to the ruined castle where they meet. At the back of the town, even within these "walls" are seen the narrow vineyard terraces, sometimes on scraps of ground that seem scarcely accessible to the cultivator.

A traveller of many years ago said: "Of all the strongholds yet noticed in our passage from Ulm, it takes undisputed precedence; and he who can pass with indifference the many feudal and monastic ruins which overlook the course of the Danube, will pause with uplifted eye and awakened imagination, as the rock-built towers of Dürrenstein flash upon his view. Its massive walls, embattled precipices and iron towers that survive the lapse of centuries, were of themselves amply sufficient to arrest attention and engage the stranger to pass a day within their gates; but when he recollects that yonder donjon tower was the prison of Cœur de Lion, a new chord is touched in his heart—more especially in that of an Englishman—and as he passes under its ponderous gateway and muses in its grass-grown and deserted courts, he feels as if acted upon by some mysterious influence—as if an invisible conductor beckoned him forward—as if the old kingly crusader himself accosted him with 'Quhat tydings from England?'"

If I cannot claim to have felt the spirit of the place in that fashion, it may be because seventy years have reduced the ruins to a yet more ruinous state, and so the illusion that the king might still be here anxious for "tydings" is little likely to arise. Though the little town itself is

attractive, it is of course the ruined fortress that makes the strongest appeal, historically and sentimentally, to the British visitor. Whether approached by way of the scattered rocks on the eastern side, or by the pathway which leads from near within the "ponderous gateway" (to the town, not to the castle) up to the ruins, we find ourselves on the conical summit of rugged rock standing out at the end of a mountain spur among the sadly battered remains of the old castle. Here and there are great pieces of wall still standing, but the whole is in a time-battered, broken state which makes it difficult to recall the plan of the place. One tall piece of wall looks afar off curiously like a gigantic figure, and near at hand but little imagination is necessary to see in it the figure of the great crusader himself!

The view from the castle ruins up the river towards Weissenkirchen across to the mountain-surrounded level on which Rossatz stands and down-stream across a hemmed-in vine-grown battlefield towards Vienna, with the great monastery of Gottweih on a conical hill in the distance, is a most attractive one; while between the ruins and the mountains is a narrow gorge, with beyond it the jagged edge of the extraordinary rock mass where a large part of it was blasted to make the railway which now runs though the hill on which Dürrenstein Castle stands. In the centre of the ruins is a gigantic, more or less roughly cubic, mass of granite out of which a windowless chamber has been roughly hewn, and here, says tradition, is the veritable prison in which Richard was confined by his implacable enemy, Duke Leopold of Austria.

It was when returning from crusading in the east that Richard, travelling disguised through Austria—the Duke of which he had offended at Ascalon—was recognized and so fell into the hands of his enemy and came to be imprisoned in this powerful castle, under the charge of

Hadmar, the father of that Hadmar the Hound of Kuenring, of whom we learned at Aggstein. The romantic story runs, that the place of Richard's imprisonment being unknown, his faithful minstrel Blondel de Nesle set out, wandering all over Europe to learn if he could the fate or whereabouts of the King of England. Accidentally he learned that in Dürrenstein Castle some distinguished person was confined and guarded with unusual vigilance. Not unnaturally he thought that this mysterious prisoner must be the royal master whom he sought. He reached Dürrenstein, but could get no news as to who the prisoner was, and the gates of the castle were shut against him. Blondel then bethought him of a *chanson* which he and King Richard had composed together, and getting as near within hearing of the prisoner's place of concealment as he could, he sang his own part of the song :

“Your beauty, lady fair,
None view without delight,
But still as cold as air,
No passion you excite ;
Yet this I patient see,
While all are shunned by me.”

The minstrel paused, and at once came the second part of the *chanson* sung from within and proving beyond doubt the identity of the prisoner with the king of whom the minstrel was in search :

“No nymph my heart can wound,
If favours she divide,
And smile on all around,
Unwilling to decide ;
I'd rather hatred bear,
Than love with others share.”

The wonderful metrical romance dealing with the life of Richard Cœur de Lion does not—judging by so much of it as was given by Sir Henry Ellis—refer to

the place of the king's incarceration by name ; therefore we may place here the wonderful incident of his wooing by Margery the daughter of the King of Almain—who should presumably be Duke of Austria—and of the way in which he won his nickname. Richard the prisoner and the King of Almain's son had had a buffeting duel. Richard received the first blow which made him stagger, but when he gave his blow in return the prince's "cheek bone was crushed . . . he sank to the ground and instantly expired."

"The offended monarch now sent in haste for his great council—

"Earls, barons and wise clerks,
To tell of these woeful werks—

and explained to them his reasons for desiring the death of Richard, requesting them, if possible, to set aside the general law of Europe by which the persons of Kings were declared inviolable, and to order the immediate punishment of the traitor. The council took the matter into their serious consideration, debating during three days, and concluded by declaring themselves incompetent to pass judgment: but one of them complaisantly recommended to the king a certain judge named Sir Eldrys, whose ingenuity in condemning prisoners was thought to be unparalleled, and who would probably suggest to his majesty the means of vengeance.

"Sir Eldrys, recollecting that he had seen in the royal menagerie a lion of prodigious size and fierceness, advised that the animal should be kept during some days without food, and then introduced to the prisoner, whom he would be very likely to devour ; so that his majesty, who could not be suspected of a secret intelligence with the lion, would obtain the gratification of his just revenge, without having infringed the law by passing sentence on a free and independent sovereign. This

equitable project was of course adopted by the King ; and immediate orders were issued for carrying it into execution.

“ Margery, who had her spies in the council, being apprised of what had passed, instantly sent for her lover ; warned him of his danger ; proposed to him the means of escape from her father’s territories ; and offered to accompany him in his flight,

“ With gold and silver, and great tresore,
Enough to have for evermore.
Richard said, ‘ I understand
That were again the law of the land,
Away to wend withouten leave :
The King ne will I nought so grieve.
Of the lion ne give I nought ;
Him to slay now have I thought.
By prime, on the third day,
I give thee his heart to prey.’

“ He then directed her to repair to the prison, with forty handkerchiefs of white silk, on the evening before the combat ; to order her supper in his cell ; to invite his two friends and the jailor to the entertainment, and afterwards to pass the night with him : and the princess, without staying to enquire how far this conduct was compatible with that scrupulous regard for her father’s peace of mind by which Richard professed to be actuated, punctually obeyed all his directions.

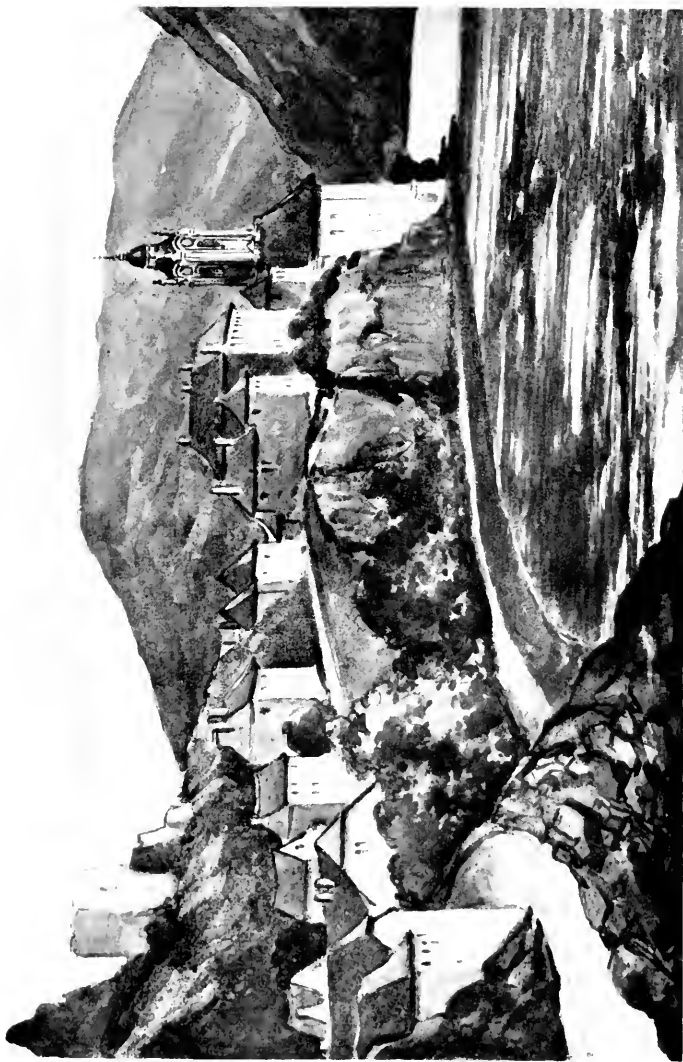
“ In the morning, the tender Margery, ever trembling for her lover’s safety and always fearless for her own, was with great difficulty persuaded to tear herself from the prison ; but having at length returned to her apartment, Richard bound round his arm the silken handkerchiefs, and recommending himself to God, calmly awaited the arrival of the lion.

“ The animal, attended by two keepers, and followed by the jailor, was then led in ; and, as soon as he was loosed, sprang forwards to seize his prey. Richard,

starting aside, evaded the attack, and at the same time gave the monster such a blow on the breast with his fist as nearly felled him to the ground. The lion, lashing himself with his tail, and extending his dreadful paws, now uttered a most hideous roar, and prepared for a more violent assault; but the hero, seizing his opportunity when the monster's jaws were extended, suddenly darted on him, drove his arm down the throat, and, grasping the heart, forcibly tore it out through the mouth together with a part of the entrails. Then, after piously returning thanks to Heaven for his miraculous victory, he snatched up the bleeding heart, and without meeting with any obstacle, marched with his trophy into the great hall of the palace.

“ The king at meat sat on des,
 With dukes and earls proud in press.
 The saler on the table stood :
 Richard pressed out all the blood,
 And wet the heart in the salt ;
 (The king and all his men behalt)
 Withouten bread the heart he ate.
 The king wonder'd, and said skeet :
 ‘ Y-wis, as I understand can,
 This is a devil and no man,
 That has my strong lion y-slawe,
 The heart out of his body drawe,
 And has it eaten with good will !
 He may be callèd, by right skill
 King y-christened of most renown
 Strong Richard Cœur de Lion ! ’ ”

If Richard was incarcerated in the chamber hollowed out of the great mass of granite, and that was at the time, as it was later, enclosed within walls, it is a little difficult to realize how the minstrel's voice ever penetrated the monarch's prison; but the legend is so pleasant a one that it would perhaps be a more gracious task to find out how it might have been true, rather than to show how it is probably a fiction. The theme is one



that has inspired poets, painters, and musicians. When Gretry's opera on the subject of "Richard Cœur de Lion," was produced in Paris early in the nineteenth century, an artist was sent to Dürnstein to sketch the castle that the scenery might be true. Mrs. Hemans wrote a narrative poem on the subject of Blondel's search for his captive master, and described the position of the king's prison as though she had visited it :

"He hath reached a mountain hung with vine. . . .
The feudal towers that crest its height
Frown in unconquerable might ;
Dark is their aspect of sullen state,
No helmet hangs o'er the massy gate,
To bid the wearied pilgrim rest,
At the chieftain's board a welcome guest ;
Vainly rich evening's parting smile
Would chase the gloom of the haughty pile,
That midst bright sunshine lowers on high,
Like a thunder cloud in a summer sky. . . .
Lingering he gazed—the rocks around
Sublime in savage grandeur frowned ;
Proud guardians of the regal flood,
In giant strength the mountains stood ;
By torrents cleft, by tempests riven,
Yet mingling still with the calm blue heaven."

The story of Blondel is merely legendary, and it was probably only a sordid matter of ransom by which Richard Cœur de Lion won to freedom, and not owing to the devotion of his faithful minstrel. When Planché visited Dürrenstein he described the castle keep as being "not unlike the fine ruin at Rochester." Either his memory did scant justice to Rochester, or else the ruins of Dürrenstein have become greatly damaged during the past seventy years, for to-day there is nothing to suggest a comparison between the great grim Norman keep on low ground near the Medway at Rochester, and the battered ruin which seems, as it were, to grow out of the jagged pinnacled rocks high above the Danube.

From the neighbourhood of the castle run broken cliff edges south-easterly and south-westerly towards the Danube ; these have at some period been built up into actual walls for defence, and in olden pre-artillery times must have rendered the town which they enclose on two sides—the third being formed by the Danube—a very formidable place. So formidable indeed that, even after the introduction of artillery, it is said that the citizens were able to give a good account of themselves. For, in 1741, a party of French and Bavarian cavalry having got across the Danube, thought to surprise Dürrenstein and make it an easy prey, believing it to be undefended. The citizens of the place were equal to the occasion, having prepared themselves for such an emergency. They barred up their gates as well as they could, laid bored logs of timber with their edges blackened, on the walls, in imitation of cannon, chalked the rims of their hats, to give them the appearance of being bound with white lace, according to the uniform of their troops at that time, and parading up and down the ramparts—taking care that their hats only should be seen above the walls—with much blowing of trumpets and beating of drums, absolutely induced the enemy to believe that the place was strongly garrisoned ; and they accordingly wheeled to the right-about without firing a shot, to the infinite joy and amusement of the cunning inhabitants, who certainly well deserved their escape.

The small town, with its irregular white houses, its glimpses into great wine-pressing cellars, its thick-walled, low-arched, crypt-like inns, its men with long pipes ever pendant from their mouths, its generous archways—wide as the street itself—giving on to yards in which are seen great barrels, and the carts on which such barrels are carried, is quite an old-world place. Of the extent to which it is given over to wine I had an

illustration during my stay, when I saw boys busy digging a large circular hole close to the footway at a point where the main street is widened by one house being set some distance back. The following morning I saw a great wine-pressing tub half sunk in the hole and presumably already filled with grapes, as its great cover was pressed down by a variety of heavy articles. Sometimes these wayside vats are not covered in at all, for I have seen them when heavy rain was adding its share of liquid to the juice of the grape. Possibly the fact that it was a very bad grape harvest may excuse the wine-growers' winking at Nature's attempt to make up the deficit!

Above the tunnel-like gateway on the east side of the town is a tiny cemetery with the remains of the old parish church, and a charnel-house with thousands of human skulls piled up in orderly array—a grim memento mori like that of the church at Hythe and some other places. The old abbey ruins, the ornate church near the river-side, and the modern château now apparently degenerated into tenements—are the most conspicuous buildings in this little town, the narrow main street of which has quite a mediæval appearance. On the front of one of the gasthauses is painted up the inscription:—

“ So lang im glas noch blinkt der Wein
Brüder lasst uns fröhlich sein.”
 (“ So long as in the glass a drop of wine
Brothers let us happy be.”)

Frequently within a gasthaus we may see humorous wall paintings, or convivial and other inscriptions. In one that I recall there was on one wall a representation of an attenuated traveller (very like a distinguished English dramatist, paradox-monger, and Socialist), being welcomed by a portly Boniface; on another a couple, “with most expressive eyes,” in national costume

dancing to the music of a remarkable quartet ; while in the corner was a wife with a broom dragging home a drunken husband. Among the inscriptions I noted some to the following effect :—

“ Hail, pretty fellows ! ”
 “ A German can drink
 An ocean I think.”
 “ Waidmanns Heil ! ” *

A little to the south-east of Dürrenstein, on a rugged base at the foot of which the railway now runs, is a large stone pillar erected to the memory of all the brave soldiers, French, Austrian, and Russian, who fell here during a stern battle on 11 November, 1805. When Napoleon had reached Linz on his march to Vienna he sent Marshal Mortier with a force to take possession of Krems, but in this little plain the French came in touch with the Austrians and Russians under Kutusof and Schmidt. And here, as on another occasion sung by Byron—

“ Kutusof, he who afterwards beat back
 (With some assistance from the frost and snow)
 Napoleon on his bold and bloody track,
 It happened was himself beat back just now.”

The French drove the allies back to the gates of Stein, but the tables were turned on them, even, as it seemed, in the moment of victory. A hunter, familiar with the passes among the neighbouring heights, had guided a large body of Russian troops and enabled them to fall upon the French rear, and a murderous battle took place in this little plain. “ Mortier had no remedy but to cut his way, if possible, through the column in his rear, and so effect a junction with Dupont, to whom he had, fortunately for himself, sent orders to quicken

* This presumably as a salutation to the workmen employed at a large ultramarine factory in the neighbourhood.



DUCKENSTEIN CASTLE

his march. Major Henriod, at the head of the 100th Regiment, charged the Russians, and a horrible carnage ensued in the narrow defiles, crowded with infuriated soldiery. Two pieces of artillery, which Mortier had with him, decided the issue of the combat in his favour, his adversaries being destitute of cannon. The brave Austrian, Schmidt, fell at the first discharge, and Doctorof, endeavouring to withdraw his troops from the ravine, was suddenly attacked in the rear by the division of Dupont, and thus found himself, in his turn, between two fires. With much difficulty he effected his retreat over the mountain he had just descended; and the desperate troops of Mortier, rushing into the defile, as they imagined, on the bayonets of their enemies, found themselves, before they were aware, in the arms of their friends and countrymen. From twelve to fifteen hundred men were lost on each side, and the allies received a terrible blow in the death of General Schmidt, the friend and companion-in-arms of the Archduke Charles." Mortier, himself wounded in the desperate fight, succeeded in getting the remnant of his troops across the Danube by a bridge of boats at Spitz.

The monument commemorating the inconsequent contest is simply inscribed :—

"To You
Valiant Warriors
French, Austrian, Russian,
11 Nov.
MDCCCV "

Now the battlefield is largely covered with vineyards, in which the little villages of Ober Loiben and Unter Loiben seem to drowse peacefully without any memory of the struggle of which on that terrible day they formed the storm centre.

As we go on down the river, ahead of us on a hill-top is seen a massive building—long, indeed, a feature

of any wide view taken from this part of the country. This is another great monastery lying some miles from the right bank of the Danube. An easterly turn of the river again brings us to a widened part of the valley, with a bridge ahead connecting Mautern on the right bank with Stein on the left.

Mautern is a small old town with little to show of its antiquity, thanks to the frequency with which it has been the scene of battle. To mention but the chief occasions: it was here that Matthias Corvinus, King of Hungary, defeated the Austrians in 1484. Here, in 1805, the Russian General Kutusof was forced to retreat before the French under Murat, and having crossed the Danube, promptly burnt the bridge. Four years later when Napoleon was making his second advance on Vienna the Austrians themselves destroyed the bridge.

About three miles inland from Mautern, its bulk showing, as has been said, clearly against the sky from the summit of an isolated hill, is the great Benedictine monastery of Gottweih. Less splendid than M \ddot{o} lk, it is yet more strikingly situated. Though founded in the eleventh century the present edifice dates from the eighteenth. It is notable for its grand library of old books and manuscripts, and thus drew the attention of the Rev. Thomas Dibdin when making his celebrated "Bibliographical, Picturesque and Antiquarian Tour in France and Germany" about ninety years ago. The abbot of Gottweih, whom Dibdin interviewed, had been there during the Napoleonic wars, and his words seem to make more real for us the time when this stretch of the Danube was again and again the scene of fierce fighting. It was probably at the windows of the great library that the abbot stood with his bibliographical visitor when he said: "Look at the prospect around you—it is unbounded. On yonder wooded heights, on the opposite shore of the Danube, we all saw, from these



STEIN



very windows, the fire and smoke of the advanced guard of the French army, in contest with the Austrians in their first advance to Vienna. The Emperor Buonaparte himself took possession of this monastery. He slept here, and the next day we entertained him with the best *déjeuner à la fourchette* which we could afford. He seemed well satisfied with his reception—but I own that I was glad when he left us. Strangers to arms in this tranquil retreat, and visited only as you may now visit us, for the purpose of peaceful hospitality, it agitated us extremely to come in contact with warriors and chieftains. Observe yonder, that castle, so tradition reports, once held your Richard the First, when detained prisoner by the Duke of Austria.”

Though some distance from the river, the monastery forms so striking an object in the scenery that there are few visitors with the time at their command but will wish to journey out to it, and see the grand buildings, the fine church, the library, and the magnificent prospect afforded from the splendidly situated place.

Returning to the Danube, and crossing the bridge of iron laid upon stone piers we come to Stein. The most notable features that first take the eye are the two churches, the one red cupola spired, with steep red-tiled roof, the other with a massive white tower showing clearly against the vineyard terraces which lie closely at the back of the narrow town, and a curious old tower with crooked-tiled roof near the water-side. The ancient towered, Dutch-like church stands on the Frauenberg immediately above the newer one, and is reached by a long flight of steps. Near it are scraps of old ruins—stone walls and arches, worked largely into cottages and garden walls, while further west, with modern cottages built among them, are the ruins of an old castle destroyed by Matthias Corvinus in 1486—for Stein, too, has seen its share of fighting. From the neighbourhood of the

ruins we get a good view of Gottweih on its rounded hill to the south.

Stein is practically linked with Krems, though each retains its gateway. The buildings—military and other—between the two towns, really form a third place named Und which has occasioned the pleasantry that “Krems Und Stein are three places.” Possibly Krems and Stein being such close neighbours that they were frequently referred to as Krems und Stein led to the name Und being fastened upon the connecting link which consisted at one time of nothing but the Capuchin monastery of Und. As we leave Stein there is to be noticed, painted up at the gateway, the words:—

“An Gottes Segen ist alles gelegen.”

(“By God’s blessing all have their opportunity.”)

It seemed rather a suggestive motto to be blazoned in the eyes of the convicts who were engaged in building close by at the time that I was there. By a short promenade under trees we reach the tall picturesque gateway of Krems, the eastern-most end of the wonderful Wachau.

Krems is a delightful old town—the largest on the Danube between Linz and Vienna. It is particularly attractive when seen in a state of animation consequent upon the arrival of a force of new recruits, welcomed by all the townspeople, and by the cheering bands of their more experienced comrades, or when the Pfarr Platz is crowded with a motley throng of people on market day, when the Platz is filled with stalls, largely extemporized from a couple of the quaint, bowed, legless barrows on which the peasants trundle their wares to market. Bread and meat, vegetables, fowls and dairy produce, and quantities of beautiful white wood utensils are the chief things for sale; and among them moves an ever-changing crowd of kerchiefed women. Above the throng rises the great grey church with massive tower.



THE MARKET PLACE, KREMS



To the north of this fifteenth-century parish church, is another church, on the Frauenberg, and leaving the busy market by the beautiful corner of the Sangerhof, up a long flight of roofed-in steps (the Piarristen Stiege), we reach this old edifice, the most remarkable feature of which is the extraordinary series of sculptured figures with painted backgrounds, representing scenes in the life of Christ, between the external piers.

There are many old-world bits about the town, which appears to combine picturesque age with modern prosperity, while tragedy and romance are both revealed when we inquire into the story of Krems. One of the earliest mentions made of it is in connexion with one of those fanatical outbursts which ever and again stain the page of history. We saw at Deggendorf how a wild story of sacrilege led to a horrible slaughter of the Jews in that place, and in 1347 there was a similar outbreak here, when it is said the streets ran with blood. It may be surmised that the wealth the Jews had acquired moved the cupidity of their fellow-townfolk. The pretext chosen was, however, that the Jews had poisoned the town wells, but that the other motive was regarded as the real one by the persecuted, may be gathered from the fact that many of the Hebrews "made their despair minister to their vengeance, and barring up themselves, their family and their riches together, set fire to the building and perished exultingly in the flames that anticipated the spoiler."

In the following century the town was twice besieged by the Hungarian king, Matthias Corvinus, and that brave prince only succeeded in the second attempt. The people of Krems seem to have become inured to warfare, for when the town was attacked in 1619, on the Bohemian Protestants invading Austria, even the women won martial glory. It is recorded that the garrison having sallied forth to give battle to the foe,

they were cut off, and the Bohemians, who had got in their rear, at once sought to scale the seemingly undefended walls, "but the women, with one consent, seizing the first weapons they could find, rushed to the ramparts, and fought with such steady bravery that the enemy were at length obliged to abandon the attempt."

Krems is the easterly termination of the Wachau—the beautiful extent of the scenic Danube most readily reached by rail or boat from Vienna. Though when I was there in September and October there were not many holiday-making folk about the villages or the quiet river-side roads, it is evidently much frequented in the summer time, judging by the advertisements of "trips" to be seen in Vienna. The "discoverer" of the attractions of this lovely bit of country was, during my stay in Dürrenstein, honoured by the unveiling (9 October, 1910) of a memorial in that village. The memorial takes the form of a large, square, brass medallion portrait let into the river-side face of the rock on which the church stands. The simple inscription runs :—

" AUGUSTIN WEIGL
Die Dankbare Wachau
1910 "

CHAPTER VII
THE WACHAU TO DÉVÉNY

“ There where the Danube broadly sweeps,
Mid islands willow grown,
The City of St. Stephen stands,
An Empire’s lovely throne ;
While o’er the river, on the plain,
Far battle echoes roll.”

From the German

AT Krems, already the valley of the Danube has again widened out very considerably, especially on the north ; and for the greater part of the journey thence to Vienna the river flows through a broad flat tract of country, only approaching the hills closely at one point, where it washes the northern end of the Wiener Wald, which is soon seen rising darkly ahead of us, many miles away. A number of small branches of the river cut the low, willow-grown land into many islands again here, and these islands cut off the view on either side for some distance. When the solitary church of Wetterkreutz, on a hill, and the small town of Hollenburg are passed, the right bank, too, becomes scenically uninteresting. The ruined castle of Bertholdstein above Hollenburg, is said to have been the stronghold of a couple more of the fifteenth-century river robbers—a pair of worthies named Frohnauer and Wettau. These two seem at last to have aroused their neighbours to retaliation, for when the robbers were engaged in seeking to stop a barge that they might

secure what they wished of its cargo, their castle was set on fire. The story is a little reminiscent of one of those told of Aggstein :

“A barge floats down the Danube’s flood,
 With costly merchandise—
 ‘Now up and arm, my comrades good,
 That barge shall be our prize!’

So spake the robber Hollenburg,
 And, girding on his glaive,
 Swift through the glen, with his harnessed men,
 He rushed to the Danube’s wave.

‘To the shore! to the shore! thou skipper knave!
 For thy life and prize are mine!’
 ‘Not so, proud knight! for we bear this freight
 To the Lord of Greiffenstein.

Look back!’—And looking back he saw
 His towers in a ruddy blaze
 Where flashing aloof, through the crackling roof,
 The fiery vengeance plays.

‘Now yield thee! yield thee!’ the skipper calls—
 For thy men we’ve a gallows-tree,
 We have loyal hearts to fill thy halls—
 But an axe and block for thee!’”

Shortly beyond Hollenburg, also on the right, the river Traisen flows in, and not far from its mouth, but invisible as we pass down the Danube, stands the ancient town of Traisenmauer, the home of Helka the first queen of Etzel, and the last stopping place of Kriemhilda on her journey from the Rhine to her marriage with Etzel and to her long-nursed revenge. We have remarked the splendid cavalcade as it touched points of the river, and may here recall the stanzas describing its arrival at this penultimate stage of the long journey:—

“ Unto the Traisen river the guests they soon did bring ;
And Rudeger's retainers served them unwearying,
Until the Hun-folk riding across the country came.
Then was there mickle honour done to the royal dame.

The King of the Huns' country did near the Traisen own
A very noble stronghold to everyone well known.
Its name was Traisen mauer where Helka lived of yore,
And practised such great virtues, scarce met with any more.”

From Traisen the cavalcade went on to Tulln, where the King of the Huns awaited his new bride, and whence he bore her to Vienna for the marriage, according to the legendary lay. As the Danube winds through the close-grown willow banks, the hills of the Wiener Wald are seen ahead and to the right, but while we are yet some miles from the northern spur of them we reach, on the same bank, one of the oldest of the Danube towns, the Tulln which has just been mentioned.

The flat plain in which it is situated—the Tullner Feld—has been the gathering place of great armies, and the town itself has seen much of battle. Though the legend of the “Nibelungen Lied” makes it the meeting place of Kriemhilda with Etzel or Attila, history associates it with one of the King of the Huns' most disastrous battles, when he is said not only to have been defeated, but to have had forty thousand of his warriors slain. This, too, may be legend, but certain it is that, as Comagenæ, the town was an important Roman station, and that at the beginning of the ninth century Charlemagne presented it to Passau, whose bishops once owned territory of royal extent.

When, in 1683, Vienna was closely invested by the Turks, it was in the Tullner Feld that the armies of John Sobieski, King of Poland, and the Duke of Lorraine united and marched to the relief of the Austrian capital. Vienna was in imminent danger when the Emperor

Leopold implored Sobieski to hasten to his assistance, even without an army: "My troops are now assembling. The bridge over the Danube is already constructed at Tulln, to afford you a passage. Place yourself at their head, however inferior in numbers, your name alone, so terrible to the enemy, will ensure a victory!" Sobieski could not resist this flattery and "at the head of thirty one thousand horse, traversed Silesia and Moravia with the rapidity of a Tartar horde, but on his arrival at Tulln, found the bridge unfinished, and no troops except a corps under the Duke of Lorraine. "Does the Emperor consider me as an adventurer," exclaimed the disappointed monarch. "I quitted my army to command his. It is not for myself, but for him, that I fight." Pacified, however, by the representations of the Duke of Lorraine, he awaited the arrival of his own army, which reached the Danube on the 5th September, and the junction of the German succours was completed on the 7th. The bridge was ready—presumably a bridge of boats—and Sobieski at length set forth at the head of an army of between sixty and seventy thousand men, and on the morning of the 12th the hard-pressed garrison and citizens of Vienna, "descried with rapture the Christian standards floating on the summit of the Kahlenberg."

An old castle in Tulln was at one time the haunt of a couple of ghosts. The one that of a fair but frail lady who had been killed by her husband on discovering her faithlessness, the other that of her attendant maid. This ghostly couple, ran the tradition, only made their appearance on Mondays at midnight—presumably it was on a Monday that the tragedy happened; but a "barefooted monk" succeeded in exorcising the ghost of the maid, though the mistress refused to be amenable to the ghost-laying ritual. According to Planché, quoting an unnamed "prudent antiquary," "the whole

history" is to be found in the archives of a certain noble house ; but as it would redound to the prejudice of the descendants, should the name be made known, it has been passed over in silence. Some time ago an attempt was made to pull down the building, but the indignant phantom raised such a racket that the workmen beat a retreat, and the project was abandoned !

A little beyond Tulln we pass the villages of Ober and Unter Aigen, or the village Langenlebern, for straggling along the river bank, the two places seem sometimes to be given one name. This point is interesting as being that of old gold-seeking attempts. The sands of the Danube have yielded gold, and those hereabouts seemingly most successfully. The local quidnuncs accounted for this by saying that when in the year 926 a certain Bishop Draculf was drowned near this spot, he was carrying secured in his girdle about forty pounds' weight of gold, which he had smuggled out of a monastery that he had been visiting ! The legend is one that might well have inspired Ingoldsby. Another small village further along on the same side of the river is Zeiselmayer, the old Roman Cetium, and birthplace of that St. Florian of whom we learned something a little below Linz.

After leaving Tulln, as we near the northernmost "bergs" of the Wiener Wald, the scenery becomes once more beautiful ; on the left are still the low lands through which a number of small branches of the river find their way, but on the right, the wooded hillsides that we are approaching lend a fresh variety to the landscape. Soon is seen ahead of us on a rocky knoll the square tower of the ruined castle of Greifenstein sometimes described as having been the prison in which Duke Leopold kept Richard Cœur de Lion captive in an iron cage. The claims of Dürrenstein, and Trifels are more strongly upheld, and are accepted by

the historians ; in the case of Greifenstein the matter rests on nothing firmer than the "they say" of tradition.

This castle is also said to owe its name—"Greif-anden-Stein"—to the *fact* that the hill on which it stands was at one time the haunt of a griffin, the marks of the talons of which can still be found in the rocks by those who regard seeing as necessary to believing. But the griffin is not the only tradition of this beautifully situated place, for it has the great distinction of being doubly haunted—by an "old white woman" and by one of the first of the lords of Greifenstein who, early in the eleventh century, "swore a dreadful oath." The story of the first of these ghosts haunting the castle is told by Planché, who says that it arose owing to the fact that a châtelaine of the place, the Lady Bountiful of the neighbourhood, was given to devoting herself to the cure of the sick, and was so generally successful that the very people whom she had benefited at length suspected her of possessing an unholy supernatural power, and so on her death, having received all the good they could at her hands, the peasants accused her posthumously of witchcraft, and declared that her ghost haunted the place of demoniacally inspired benefactions !

The second ghost story about this castle on the edge of the Wiener Wald is a long one, but deserves remembering for its romantic elements, and may best be given here in the words of Planché :

"As early as the eleventh century the lords of Greifenstein were famed and feared throughout Germany. One of the first knights who bore that name, lost his lady soon after she had presented him with a daughter, who received the name of Etelina. The dying mother painfully aware how little attention would be paid to the education of a female by a rude and reckless father, half knight, half freebooter, however fond he might be of his child, had recommended her infant, with her last

breath, to the care of a kind and pious monk, the chaplain of the castle; and under his affectionate guidance, the pretty playful girl gradually ripened into the beautiful and accomplished woman. Sir Reinhard of Greifenstein, though stern, turbulent, and unlettered himself, was, nevertheless, sensible to the charms and intelligence of his daughter; and often as he parted her fair hair and kissed her ivory forehead, before he mounted the steed or entered the bark, that waited to bear him to the hunt or the battle, a feeling of which he was both proud and ashamed would moisten his eye and subdue a voice naturally harsh and grating, into a tone almost of tenderness. On his return, weary and sullen, from a fruitless chase or a baffled enterprise, the song of Etelina could banish the frown from his brow, when even the wine-cup had been thrust untasted away, and the favourite hound beaten for a mistimed gambol. So fair a flower, even in the solitary castle of Greifenstein, was not likely to bloom unknown or unsought. The fame of Etelina's beauty spread throughout the land. Many a noble knight shouted her name as his bright sword flashed from the scabbard, and many a gentle squire fought less for his gilt spurs, than for the smile of Etelina. The minstrel who sang her praises had aye the richest largess, and the little footpage who could tell where she might be met with in the summer's twilight, clinging to the arm of the silver-haired chaplain, might reckon on a link of his master's chain of gold for every word he uttered. But the powerful and the wealthy sighed at her feet in vain—she did not scorn them, for so harsh a feeling was unknown to the gentle Etelina. Nay, she even wept over the blighted hopes of some, whose fervent passion deserved a better fate; but her heart was no longer hers to give. She had fixed her affections upon the poor but noble Rudolph and the lovers awaited impatiently some turn of fortune

which would enable them to proclaim their attachment without fear of the anger and opposition of Sir Reinhard, who was considerably annoyed by Etelina's rejection of many of the richest Counts and Barons of Germany.

"Business of importance summoned the old Knight to the Court of the Emperor. His absence, prolonged from month to month, afforded frequent opportunities of meeting to the lovers; and the venerable monk, on whom the entire charge of the castle and its inhabitants had devolved at Sir Reinhard's departure, was one evening struck dumb with terror, by the confession which circumstances at length extorted from the lips of Etelina! Recovered from the first shock, however, his affection for his darling pupil seemed only increased, by the peril into which passion had plunged her. In the chapel of the castle, he secretly bestowed the nuptial benediction upon the imprudent pair, and counselled their immediate flight, and concealment, till his prayers and tears should wring forgiveness and consent from Sir Reinhard, who was now on his return home, accompanied by a wealthy nobleman, on whom he had determined to bestow the hand of his daughter. Scarcely had Rudolph and Etelina reached the cavern in the neighbouring wilderness, selected for their retreat by the devoted old man, who had furnished them with provisions, a lamp and some oil, promising to supply them from time to time with the means of existence, as occasions should present themselves, when the rocks of the Danube rang with the well known blast of Sir Reinhard's trumpet, and a broad banner lazily unfolding itself to the morning breeze, displayed to the sight of the wakeful warden the two red griffins rampant in a field vert, the blazon of the far feared Lords of Greifenstein. In a few moments the old Knight was galloping over the drawbridge, followed by his intended son-in-law.

"The clatter of their horses' hoofs struck upon the

heart of the conscious chaplain, as though the animals themselves were trampling on his bosom; but he summoned up his resolution, and relying on his sacred character, met his master with a firm step and a calm eye, in the hall of the castle. Evading a direct answer to the first enquiry for Etelina, he gradually and cautiously informed Sir Reinhard of her love, her marriage, and her flight. Astonishment for a short space held the old warrior spell-bound, but when his gathered fury at last found vent, the wrath of the whirlwind was less terrible. He seized the poor old monk by the throat, and upon his firm refusal to reveal the retreat of the culprits, dashed him to the earth, had him bound hand and foot, and flung into a pit beneath an iron grating in the floor of the donjon or keep of the castle. Tearing, like an infuriated Pasha, 'his very beard for ire,' he called down curses on Etelina and her husband, and prayed that, if ever he forgave them, a dreadful and sudden death might overtake him on the spot where he should revoke the malediction he now uttered! Upwards of a year had elapsed when, one winter day, the Knight of Greifenstein, pursuing the chase, lost his way in the mazes of a wilderness on the banks of the Danube. A savage-looking being, half clothed in skins, conducted him to a cavern, in which a woman similarly attired was seated on the ground, with an infant on her knees, and greedily gnawing the bones of a wolf—Sir Reinhard recognised in the squalid form before him his once beautiful Etelina. Shocked to the soul at the sight of the misery to which his severity had reduced her, he silently motioned to the huntsmen, who came straggling in upon his track to remove the wretched pair and their poor little offspring to the castle. Moved by the smiles of his innocent and unconscious grandchild he clasped his repentant daughter to his bosom, as she recrossed the threshold, bore her up into the banquet hall, and

consigning her to the arms of her faithful Rudolph, hastened down again to release with his own hands the true-hearted monk, who still languished in captivity. In descending the steep staircase his foot slipped, and he was precipitated to the bottom—his fall was unseen—his cry was unheard—dying, he dragged himself a few paces along the pavement, and expired upon the very spot where he had just embraced and forgiven his daughter. Rudolph, now Lord of Greifenstein, restored the chaplain to liberty, and lived long and happily with his beloved Etelina; but the spirit of Sir Reinhard to this day wanders about the ruins of his ancestral castle, and will continue so to do till the stone whereon he expired shall be worn in twain. ‘Alas! poor ghost!’ the very slight hollow which is at present perceivable in it, affords you little hope of its division by fair means previously to the general ‘*crack* of doom.’”

Such is the romantic story attaching to this square-towered old ruin picturesquely set on the summit of a tree-grown hill. The view from the storied place is a peculiarly beautiful one—over the extensive Tullner Feld, up the broad Danube, and across the archipelago of islands formed by the branching of the river. But a short journey from Vienna, it is small wonder that this is a popular point for holiday makers to seek. Beyond Greifenstein the river sweeps in a southerly curve round the hills, and inland on the left, on a hill, but hidden by trees is the interesting castle of Kreuzenstein—a place which was destroyed during the Thirty Years’ War, but which has been fully restored by a modern owner, and filled with old furniture and weapons, so that it appears handsomely suggestive of what the many castle ruins we see in a journey down the river must have looked like in the days of their prosperity. Crenellated and machicolated this renewed old castle, with its towers and its great walls shows to us how great must have been the

strength of such places, well provisioned, in days when bows and pikes were the principal weapons of warfare.

Beyond, almost opposite each other, we reach Korneuburg and Klosterneuburg. Korneuburg on the left, with a handsome old fifteenth-century tower, is near the foot of the Bisamberg—the hills here nearing the river on this bank, too, for a brief time. The name of the vine-grown hill is accounted for thus: “Am Bisamberg floss in allers Zeiten de Donau Vorbei, daher sei der Name—*Bis am Berg.*”

Korneuburg, like Krems and Deggendorf, was the scene of a massacre of the Jews in the fourteenth century, and like so many of the towns we glance at as we come down the Danube, saw much of siege and battle in the good old days; being twice besieged by the conquering Matthias Corvinus, and in the Thirty Years' War being captured and garrisoned by the Swedes. Here, in 1462, the Emperor Frederick the Fourth met his rescuer, the great Bohemian King George Podiebrad, after the latter monarch had brought an army to his assistance. And that that help came only just in time may be gathered from the fact that the Emperor was closely besieged in the citadel of Vienna with only two hundred men.

Klosterneuburg, on the right bank backed by the Kahlenberg, owes its name to the great Augustine monastery, rebuilt in the seventeenth century, the oldest and wealthiest of the monasteries belonging to this Order in Austria. This Kloster is standing evidence in stone of the truth that great events from small occasions spring, for its establishment on this spot is said to have been the result of a mere puff of wind. In the chronicles of the monks themselves the story of the origin of the place is thus presented: The Margrave, Leopold the Fourth—or Leopold the Holy—having erected a new family fortress, on the summit of Mons Cetius (now the

Leopoldsberg), was sitting one evening at the window of his hall, musing on the passing events of his time—on the fate of the old emperor whom he had abandoned—and visited, perhaps, with compunctious feelings as he bethought him of his own sinful course. At his side sat his beloved spouse, the Margravine Agnes; and while they were talking over the religious topics of the day—the endowment of monasteries, the purchase of masses, and the powerful efficacy of good works in quieting the upbraidings of conscience, Leopold expressed an earnest desire to promote the glory of God by raising a sumptuous altar, and surrounding it by holy men, who should there serve Him night and day. But among the number of inviting spots which there met the eye, he could not decide which was the most eligible for the building in contemplation. Thus perplexed in his choice, he appealed to his wife; and just as she leant forward to take a more minute survey of the adjacent country, a gentle breeze, suddenly rising, fluttered for an instant amidst her flowing ringlets, and then, lifting her veil, carried it away—no one knew whither. For some days subsequent to this incident, strict search was made for the veil, but without effect. It could neither be recovered by threats of punishment nor promises of reward.

During the three months ensuing, affairs of state diverted the mind of Leopold from his pious purpose. But one day, while engaged in his favourite pastime of boar hunting, he entered a thicket of alder trees on the verge of the river, and there, to his astonishment, his steed would not take one step further, but, defying both whip and spur, dropped upon his haunches, and lastly falling upon his knees, brought his noble rider to the ground. Starting to his feet in a princely passion, and winding the small horn that hung at his belt, Leopold would have dealt very summarily with the obstinate

quadruped ; but, turning round to address his retainers, who now rushed forward to their chief, he suddenly observed the identical veil of his wife, which had been so mysteriously carried off three months before ! Leopold had always been a very piously given prince—but now that the finger of Providence was so clearly manifested his devotion became intense ; and the same day it was determined that the tree on which the veil had been deposited by angelic hands, should be enclosed in a magnificent temple. Faithful to his vow, a spacious area was soon cleared, and in the course of three years, the monastery and monks of Klosterneuburg became the admiration of architects, and the theme of pious exaltation among all the faithful. The alder tree which had preserved the mysterious veil, was cased in gold and consigned to precious immortality ; and in their religious processions branches of that sacred tree were usually carried in triumph, or woven into trophies and suspended over the altar. The fair Margravine, not to be outdone even by her husband in acts of piety, founded a nunnery at a commodious distance from the monastery, so that, by occasional intercourse, these holy friars and maidens might, without scandal or inconvenience, promote each other's spiritual welfare, and leave a bright example of mortification and self-denial—"under the veil." *

The founder of this monastery became the tutelary saint of Austria—despite the sinfulness of his course more than hinted at in the monkish legend—and it was in the chapel of St. Leopold here that his body was laid ; while the princely state of the saint was duly shown by the placing of a huge ducal hat of bronze or iron on the summit of one of the monastery's domes while another of the domes is surmounted by the Imperial crown. Within the monastery is kept the

* "The Danube," by William Beattie, M.D., 1844.

actual ducal hat, which is used at the ceremony of swearing allegiance to a new ruler.

In the chapel of St. Leopold is a famous altar, known as the Altar of Verdun from the name of its maker, Nicholas of Verdun. This was at one time regarded as the earliest example of "niello" work, and Nicholas of Verdun was credited with being the inventor of that art; but now niello is traced back to the Roman craftsmen. The niello work on this altar consists of a series of nearly sixty plaques of gilded bronze representing Biblical scenes. As in the other big monasteries still occupied, the library is here an important feature; in it are more than forty thousand volumes and about thirteen thousand MSS.

Opposite the church is a richly carved Gothic pillar—"The Everlasting Light"—which was erected in 1381 to commemorate the fact that a terrible plague visitation had come to an end. The name it has is in consequence of a votive lamp "which was kept burning before it many ages." Near the church too, is a house in which is kept a gigantic cask which holds 18,000 gallons and is regarded as a rival of the "great tun of Heidelberg." On 15 November—Leopold's Day—Viennese holiday makers come in large numbers to drink the wine and to join in the traditional custom of "Fasselrutchen," or sliding on the great barrel, mention of which may well call to mind that on the slopes of the Kahlenberg are cultivated some vineyards celebrated for the quality of their wines, and that among the wines that of Klosterneuburg is specially notable.

Immediately opposite Klosterneuburg is the village of Lang-Enzersdorf, at the foot of the vine-grown Bisamberg, and as we pass below Leopoldsberg towards Vienna we see yet more vineyards on the slopes of this hill. At Nussdorf—the port of Vienna, as it has been termed—we are near the capital, the towers and roofs

of which are to be seen away to the right across the level land ; for turning the corner, so to speak, as the Danube rounds the end of the Kahlenberg, we find that the river goes on through a wide valley. Bridges barring the way down the stream indicate that we are in the neighbourhood of a big city, though the Danube approach to Vienna may well seem disappointing. The grand buildings, the bright streets which we associate with the name must be sought at a distance from the main stream, the buildings along which are mainly wharves and offices connected with the river trade, dominating them being the great warehouses and passenger hall of the Donau-Dampfschiffahrts Gesellschaft, whence the fine steamers set out up-stream to Passau and down to Budapest, Belgrade, and the Black Sea.

Near Nussdorf a branch of the river to the right—the Danube Canal—goes off to the city and rejoins the main stream some distance below it. But before following its course and getting a glimpse of Vienna we may go up the winding stony paths, among varied shrubbery by which the summit of the Leopoldsberg is to be attained. As we rise we get ever wider views, until from the summit, about the ruins of the old castle or from the low wall by the church we are given a splendid view across the valley. Wooded slopes and a smiling valley forming a pleasant foreground to Vienna, with the beautiful tall spire of St. Stephen's church standing boldly out above the many spires and domes of the wide-spreading city, merging as we see it from this point into the beautiful country and backed by the semicircle of the hills of the Wiener Wald. To the left the broad Danube sweeps in a great curve, with beyond it the extensive flatness of the Marchfeld, scene of momentous fighting, and the lake-like expanse of the Alte Donau. From the western side of the Leopoldsberg

the view up-stream is even more beautiful, with the Klosterneuburg almost immediately below and the islanded river backed by the vine-grown hills that we have recently passed.

This lovely spot is also a favourite place of excursion with the Viennese on Sundays and holidays, sharing at once its charms and its popularity with the neighbouring height of the Kahlenberg. The old-time castle from which Leopold the Holy saw his wife's veil disappear westwards has long since gone, and the château which followed on the same site is now a place of refreshment for visitors—the group of buildings and the small church being nearly surrounded by walls. On a Sunday afternoon the dark restaurant room with its many animated visitors forms a remarkable “interior.”

By a beautiful woodland path we may pass in a quiet walk of less than half an hour to the Kahlenberg, from the summit of which, 1404 feet above sea level or about twenty feet higher than the Leopoldsberg, are to be had further extensive views. From the Stefanie tower a clear day affords a view eastwards across the valley of Vienna to the Lesser Carpathians and southwards to the Styrian Alps. There is quite a small village about the church and hotel on this hill, standing above a mass of oak and other trees, which has been made more easily accessible from Vienna by means of a mountain railway which comes from the city through vineyards and woods to the hill top. It is, however, but a little more than a three miles' walk from the city along the Beethoven Path—so named from having been a favourite resort of the composer.

Of Vienna itself it is not necessary here to say much beyond the recognition of the fact that socially, historically, and geographically it may be regarded as the centre of the Danube. The city, historically or descriptively, would call for a volume to itself. Here



VIENNA FROM LEOPOLDSBERG.

it has to be treated as but an incident in a necessarily hurried summary of the story and scenery of the whole river ; and again for ten English people who know any large stretch of the Danube there are probably a hundred who know the Austrian capital.

Approaching Vienna from the river may be, as has been suggested, a little disappointing but then it might be said that few beautiful towns have approaches worthy of their reputation ; and Vienna is in this regard not an exception. From the river we go through a variety of streets, along a broad thoroughfare—the People's Prater, a large part of which seems given over to "side shows"—and it is only when we have crossed one or other of the bridges that span the Danube Canal, and reached St. Stephen's cathedral, and then journeyed to the great theatres, galleries, museums, and palaces, that we begin to realize at once the beauty and fascination of the place. Disappointment soon gives way to appreciation, and appreciation to enthusiasm.

Though Tulln is said to have been a town before Vienna was so much as a village, it is probable that there is something of exaggeration in the saying, for excavations not infrequently reveal Roman relics in the capital, though the many sieges it has undergone during a somewhat stormy history seem to have robbed it of any lasting evidences of its age. It is, indeed, as a handsome modern city that it appeals to the eye, with its broad "Ring" roads, its grand blocks of stone buildings, its many fine statues, its evidences of culture, and its animated crowds. Beyond the life of its streets, the beauty of its many buildings, one of the most insistent memories of Vienna is the noise of the traffic on its stone-paved streets. This is not, however, the place for a detailed account of the city, we can but glance at it, as it were in passing. Despite the many tragic episodes in its long history, the place is famous as a centre of art

and music, pleasure and social life, and even a short sojourn serves to show what an endless variety of beautiful spots, on rivers, in valleys, on hills and mountains the Viennese have ever within their reach.

Though it has now spread far about the valley, and towards the foot of the vineyard hills, it is not so very long since Vienna was a walled city recalling the days when Emperors were closely besieged in their citadel, or the later times when the triumphing Napoleon made it one of the centres of his conquest. Already, however, before the walls had disappeared the town had so far expanded beyond them that, as a visitor in the early part of last century said, Vienna was "the least part of itself." The same thing might be said of London if we were to regard the City as London.

The magnificent St. Stephen's cathedral—the most prominent object in any survey of the city from the neighbouring heights—is one of the sights that remain most vividly in memory after we have left Vienna. This grand edifice, which has survived the many sieges before which so much of the ancient town has disappeared, was erected in the twelfth century, and forms one of the most beautiful of all temples for Christian worship. Its delicate crocketed spire, rising from a massive but rich tower is one of the great beauties of architecture, and the lofty interior—despite some obtrusive modernities—is grandly impressive.

The Palace at Schönbrunn is also a memorably beautiful place with its splendidly planned grounds and beautiful view of the city from its gloriette, but it is not possible to mention the many points of interest, nor to refer to the historical or legendary lore of a city that is rich in both.

One legend that may be given is that connected with the Spinnerinn am Kreuz a beautiful Gothic cross on the Wienerberg to the south of the city, from the

neighbourhood of which a lovely panorama of Vienna can be studied and admired. This was erected in 1382, replacing a simple crucifix, according to one version of the legend, which says that a lady whose husband had joined the Crusades was wont to sit day after day at the foot of the crucifix spinning and praying. When at length the husband returned safely the thankful wife erected this cross with the proceeds of her spinning. The other version of the story tells us that a young Crusader here bade farewell to his lady love, and at the moment of separation she presented him with a rose and sang—

“Take the flower ! Let the heart’s first bequeathing
Be the pledge of true faith on thy plume ;
When its perfume no longer is breathing—
Remember the rose in its bloom !

For beauty will fade, like its blossom,
Should the blight of false love interpose ;
When the canker creeps into the bosom,
Then farewell the heart and the rose.

Of the heart and the hopes of the giver,
Fit emblem this rose-bud shall be—
Henceforth they are blighted for ever—
Or blossom till gathered by thee !”

After the youth had departed the lady and her attendants were wont to take their spinning to the spot at which the lovers had parted, and there it was that she suddenly realized that her young Crusader had been killed, and she herself expired with the shock. It will be seen that those who visit the cross on the Wienerberg can take a legend with a tragic or a happy ending in accordance with their mood.

Returning to the Danube we find that the Danube canal rejoins the river some miles below the city. Some of the steamers for Budapest leave the quay by the palatial offices of the Danube Steamship Company

on the banks of the canal instead of the landing place on the main stream, and pass along part of the tree-grown Prater. Canal and river join again opposite the large island of Lobau on the left—one of the largest of the many islands formed by the branching river. Beyond this island lie some way inland little villages that have given their names to battles on which for a time the fate of Napoleon—and therefore, in a sense of Europe—depended. These villages are Aspern and Wagram, one the name of the place where Napoleon's credit as a victorious general received a rude shock, and the other that of a place where six weeks later he retrieved his fortunes in a splendid fashion.

It was in 1809 that the Emperor, having seized upon Vienna, found a great Austrian army upon the Marchfeld on the left bank of the Danube and knew that no peace was possible until it had been attacked and beaten. He selected the island of Lobau as a starting point for his operations where the narrow northern branch of the river could be rapidly bridged. On 20 May, forty thousand French troops were allowed to make an unopposed crossing to the left bank. They occupied the villages of Aspern and Essling, and on the following day were attacked by the Austrians, the army of whom under the Archduke Charles numbered eighty thousand. For two days the battle raged, a further forty thousand Frenchmen crossing the river and making the forces equal. During the struggle the village of Aspern was five times lost and won, but at length Napoleon was forced to order a retreat on to the island of Lobau. The bridges were carried away, and the great army was encamped for two days without food and without ammunition, cut off from Vienna.

Had the Archduke pressed his advantage, Napoleon's force might have been entirely destroyed; but he did not do so. Communication over the main stream was

restored, Napoleon matured his plans, and on 5 and 6 July, there was fought "between the two largest armies that had ever been brought face to face in Europe," the indecisive Battle of Wagram—a victory for Napoleon, but a victory that did no more than drive the enemy from their vantage ground on and about the Wagram plateau, "so regularly shaped as to seem as if constructed by art." Mr. Thomas Hardy in one of the "dumb show" scenes of his great epic-drama, "The Dynasts" vividly sums up the event at the moment when Napoleon began his great coup:

"The first change under the cloak of night is that the tightly packed regiments on the island are got under arms. The soldiery are like a thicket of reeds in which every reed should be a man. . . .

"At two o'clock in the morning the thousands of cooped soldiers begin to cross the bridges, producing a scene which, on such a scale, was never before witnessed in the history of war. A great discharge from the batteries accompanies this manoeuvre, arousing the Austrians to a like cannonade.

"The night has been obscure for summer-time, and there is no moon. The storm now breaks in a tempestuous downpour, with lightning and thunder. The tumult of nature mingles so fantastically with the tumult of projectiles that flaming bombs and forked flashes cut the air in company, and the noise from the mortars alternates with the noise from the clouds.

"From bridge to bridge and back again a gloomy-eyed figure stalks, as it has stalked the whole night long, with the restlessness of a wild animal. Plastered with mud, and dribbling with rain-water, it bears no resemblance to anything dignified or official. The figure is that of Napoleon, urging his multitudes over.

"By daylight the great mass of the men is across the water. At six the rain ceases, the mist uncovers

the face of the sun, which bristles on the bayonets and helmets of the French. A hum of amazement rises from the Austrian hosts, who turn staring faces southward and perceive what has happened, and the columns of their enemies standing to arms on the same side of the stream with themselves, and preparing to turn their left wing."

Thus graphically does Mr. Hardy bring before us the scene of a hundred years ago. An earlier poet had also sung the battle, but in a widely different vein, for Byron among the memorable battle scenes in "Childe Harold" describes Napoleon's army emerging from the island of Lobau as—

"A human Hydra issuing from its fen
 To breathe destruction on its winding way. . . .
 The night was dark, and the thick mist allowed
 Nought to be seen save the artillery's flame,
 Which arched the horizon like a fiery cloud,
 And in the Danube's waters shone the same—
 A mirrored Hell! The volleying roar, and loud
 Long booming of each peal on peal, o'ercame
 The ear far more than thunder, for Heaven's flashes
 Spare or smite rarely—Man's make millions ashes!"

Now, instead of a thicket of reeds, and every reed a man, the steamer slips along the shrub-grown banks of the island. When ashore, crossing the great plain of the Marchfeld, we find wide-spreading rich agricultural land, with small villages and groups of houses or farm buildings, and occasional factories about the country that but a century ago was the scene of a titanic but inconclusive struggle. Inland from one of the heights—as at Wolkersdorf, from which the poet shows the Austrian Emperor watching the struggle—we may get a view of the whole field with the plateau of Wagram, about which the contest was most severe. The Marchfeld is associated, too, with an even more momentous

struggle, for here, in 1278, Rudolph of Habsburg defeated King Ottokar of Bohemia and won the duchy of Austria and the crown of the Empire, so that on this plain may be said to have been founded the fortunes of the Habsburg dynasty, which still rules the Austrian Empire.

The greater part of the journey along the river from Vienna until we approach the Hungarian frontier is between green, wooded islands or banks, without any points of special interest after we leave the island of Lobau. The bends of the river make it occasionally appear to the eye as though closed in at either end, so that with its shrub and tree-fringed borders it reminds the traveller of some of the lakes of Eastern Canada. Occasionally we pass along sandy or stony banks and islets, unless the water be very high, with many rocks, daws, and gulls flying about or settling on the exposed ground in search of food. Gulls, it should be said, are common objects of a journey down the Danube. I cannot recall the point at which I first observed them, but certainly before reaching Vienna.

The principal places of note before we reach Hungary are on the right bank. Near Petronell—about twenty miles below Vienna—is a massive bit of Roman ruin in the form of an archway, known as the Heidentor, and shortly beyond we reach Deutsch-Altenburg the ancient Carnuntum of the Romans, celebrated for its sulphur springs, its handsome old church, and its "Hütelberg" or Hat Hill, a mound which is said to have been formed by the inhabitants bringing the earth in hatfuls to raise a simple memorial of the expulsion of the Turks.

Though, according to Gibbon, Petronell on the one side and Hainburg on the other, disputed with Altenburg the honour of being Carnuntum, excavations in the neighbourhood of the last-named place established its

claim, despite the fact that each of the others has Roman relics to show. An amphitheatre and other buildings have been revealed, which are made the more interesting from the fact that it was at Carnuntum that Severus Septimus was proclaimed Emperor, and that it was at Carnuntum that the Emperor Marcus Aurelius spent three years, while the Germanic tribes of the Quadi and the Marcomanni were threatening, and from Carnuntum that the philosopher-emperor dated the second of those "Meditations," that have given him a fame more enduring than his conquests. Here the Fourteenth Legion was stationed, and near here was the harbourage of the Roman Danube flotilla.

In the museum, opened in 1904, are preserved many of the recovered links of the place with its Roman past. It was at Carnuntum, too, that Theodoric the Ostrogoth was born, it is said, two days after the death of Attila. The next town, Hainburg, backed by the high, flattened, conical Schlossberg, is another very old place, now first noticeable for its extensive Government tobacco factory. Its old walls and towers afford many picturesque bits. A sculptured figure on one of the gates is said to represent King Etzel, thus serving to keep alive the tradition that the ruins of the castle on the conical berg, are the remains of the one in which King Etzel and Kriemhilda rested on their journey from Vienna to the Hunnish King's capital.

After the earlier flat country through which the river has brought us from Vienna, the scenery has now become more picturesque with the rising ground on the right, and soon we see ahead of us the rocky frontier of the kingdom of Hungary, and the broad extent of the frontier boundary river, the March, flowing in on the left around it.

III

THE HUNGARIAN DANUBE



CHAPTER VIII
FROM THE OLD CAPITAL TO
THE NEW

“ . . . Where kings have first been girt with Stephen’s sword,
Have first worn Stephen’s crown.”

From the Magyar

THE scenery of the Danube as we reach the Hungarian frontier has taken on a new beauty, for there is, as it were, a natural boundary to the ancient kingdom where a spur of the Little Carpathians comes down to the left bank of the river, while a lower range of hills on the right marks off the Vienna valley that we have left from the far larger one on which we soon enter. At the point where the castled foot of the Little Carpathians is washed by the mingling waters of the March (the Morava of old) and the Danube, we have, however, for a brief space, a return to something like the lofty and rocky scenery of which we have seen so much in the higher reaches of the great river. On the height above the point where the two rivers join are castle ruins scarcely distinguishable from the jagged spurs of the rock itself. These are the remains of an important fortress castle of old, which was blown up by the French in the year of the Battle of Wagram, the ancient castle of Dévény (Theben).*

* Throughout Hungary the visitor is struck by the duality of nomenclature in places, streets, etc., (the Donau becomes the Duna in Magyar) and it has seemed best to avoid any confusion as

Just beyond is the steamer landing place for the little town of the same name. It is a point well worth pausing at for the exploring of the extensive but greatly battered ruins, and for the walk inland among the hills, especially to the summit of the Thebener Kogel, from which a grand view of the course of the two rivers, and of the extensive Marchfeld is to be obtained, with on the right, near the right bank of the March, the Schlosshof, at one time the residence of Prince Eugène, one of the most celebrated generals of his age. The view from the ruins themselves, though less extensive, is even more delightful with its nearer prospect of the river, in which the castled cone of Hainburg forms an important feature. With Hainburg thus near, and Deutsch-Altenburg with its memories of imperial Rome, but a little beyond, with the great battleground of the Marchfeld stretching below us to the west, and Pozsony (Pressburg), few miles further down stream Dévény (Theben) is a centre of manifold interests as it is certainly a point of great beauty. Then, too, it makes something of a sentimental appeal as being the gateway to the ancient kingdom of Hungary.

The name of Dévény has been fancifully derived from Devoyna or Dovina, "the name of a goddess who was worshipped with honours similar to those offered to the Roman Venus," by some early race of Slavonic barbarians, and that race is supposed to have had a temple on this height. In the ninth century the Moravian empire is believed to have extended as far as this, and the founder of that empire to have had a castle here. These traditions of history, too, have their companion tradition of romance, for a tragic love story is associated with the ruins.

much as possible, by giving first the national name of a place and then in parenthesis the Germanized name imposed since the period of Austrian domination.

The story runs that in the once-upon-a-time, a lord of Dévény (Theben) had fallen in love with a beautiful Carinthian maiden named Bertha, and had won her, but one day when he was away hunting he was apprised that a warlike abbot was carrying the lady off to a convent. The lover pursued the party, recovered the fair Bertha, and bore her back to his castle. Arrangements for the nuptials in the chapel were promptly made, and the ceremony just completed when a clash of arms was heard, and the enraged abbot and the lady's uncle broke into the place with so strongly armed a force that the lord's retainers were overcome in the panic that ensued. The new-made husband and wife sought the shelter of the small Nuns' Tower on a precipitous spur of rock over the swiftly flowing river. Thither the storming abbot and his followers pursued them, and the irate man was about to seize his prey when the lovers, clasped in each other's arms, threw themselves into the river below—"and when he looked over the frightful precipice it was only to behold the flash and ripple of the wave as it received and closed over his victims—Albert of Theben and his devoted bride."

Leaving the boldly perched ruins, surmounted now by a slender column, raised as a memorial of the millenary celebration of the foundation of the Hungarian kingdom, we pass between the rocky spur of the Little Carpathians, and the lesser hills of the right bank, and in about five or six miles come to where the country opens out into one of the wide Hungarian plains. On our right stands boldly on a hill, nearly three hundred feet above the river, the great quadrangular mass of the Castle of Pozsony (Pressburg), and at its foot the ancient city of the same name—one of the largest towns in Hungary. In itself, for its history and on account of the many delightful excursions that may be made from it, Pozsony (Pressburg), is one of the places at which those

journeying by river from Vienna to Budapest, should certainly "stop-over," to use the expressive Westernism.

Apart from the ruined castle—destroyed by fire in 1811, according to one story by Italian soldiers, tired of carrying wood and water up the hill!—which is chiefly impressive for its size and for its four-square mass only broken by square towers at each angle, the glimpse of the town which we get from the river is in no way specially attractive. There are some places that can best be seen as it were in a picturesque summary from a point of vantage, places that we remember as "views," but the ancient capital of Hungary is not one of them. It is necessary to have wandered about its narrow and tortuous streets, to have gone into by-ways that are but flights of steps, affording peeps into quaint old houses on one side, and views over roofs on the other, to have visited some of the old buildings, to have become impressed with the grand panorama from the castle hill, to have wandered about the hilly suburbs, the gardens, orchards, and vineyards, and above all, perhaps, to have made one of the lively crowd on market day in the long and irregular Markt Platz—all this is necessary to awaken that pleasant feeling which makes us remember a place with a lively desire of going there again.

If Pozsony (Pressburg) has lost something of its dignity since Budapest became the capital of the kingdom, it has a splendid past—and that it is not content to dream about that past, but has taken on modern activity, is shown by the number of factories established in its neighbourhood. It is, however, justly proud of its history. Twice has it been the means of establishing the Habsburg dynasty on the Austrian throne, though, as Godkin puts it in his "History of Hungary," "it was the eagle lending his plume to wing the arrow that was to drink his own life-blood."



THE CATHEDRAL, POZSONY



The Franciscan church—in the centre of the old town, near the Rathaus—was built in 1272 by Kún Ladislas IV. in memory of the fact that it had been his aid which, four years earlier, had enabled Rudolph of Habsburg to defeat Ottocar of Bohemia at the Battle of Marchfeld; so that Hungary had its share in founding the dynasty. Then in 1741, when things seemed to have come to a bad pass with the Empress Maria Theresa, with enemies threatening on all sides, she boldly appealed to the well-known loyalty of the Hungarians, and summoned the Diet to meet her at the capital. The response was immediate, and the meeting which was at once convened, took place on 11 September, in the Castle of Pozsony (Pressburg).

Here, clad in deep mourning, with the crown of St. Stephen on her head, attended by a solemn retinue of the ladies and officers of her household, and holding in her arms her infant son (afterwards Joseph II.), Maria Theresa addressed the assembled orders of the state in Latin, to the following effect: "Deserted by my friends, persecuted by my enemies, attacked by my nearest relations, my last resource is in your loyalty, your courage, and in my own unshrinking constancy. The time has arrived when the faithful hearts and hereditary prowess of Hungary are to bear testimony before the eyes of the world. A crisis is at hand, when the sword must either be drawn in defence of your sovereign, or in support of her insulting enemies. But in the hearts of brave men, I have a resource in the worst emergencies; I have therefore chosen this hour to place in your hands the son and daughter of your sovereign, who in their extremity look to you for protection." This simple appeal is said to have met with an instant response—those present drawing their swords and shouting, "*Vitam et sanguinem! Moriamur pro rege nostro Maria Theresa!*"

The whole country was roused ; eighty thousand of the "whiskered Pandoors and the fierce hussars" gathered to the aid of their queen, and the tide of Fortune was turned.

This hailing of Maria Theresa as "king" has been ascribed by some writers to the Hungarian appreciation of the heroism of the queen, but it seems rather to have been in accordance with the Magyar tradition, for when King Louis the Saint died leaving no son, his daughter Maria, out of respect for her father, was acclaimed by the people sovereign, "but as if to mark the exceptional character of the arrangement, they insisted that she should assume the title of King, and affix to all public documents the signature *Maria Rex*."

The dress, arms, and ferocity of the Hungarian soldiery are said to have struck terror into the disciplined armies of France and Germany. A contemporary writer said, "when the Hungarian nobility took the field for their *King* Maria Theresa, the first sight of such troops struck the French army with a panic. They had, indeed, often seen detachments of these "Diabes d'Hongrie," as they used to call them ; but a whole army drawn up in battle array, unpowdered from the general to the common soldier, half their faces covered with long whiskers, a sort of round beaver on their heads instead of hats, without ruffles or frills to their shirts, and without feathers, all clad in rough skins, monstrous crooked sabres, ready drawn and uplifted, their eyes darting flashes of rage sharper than the beams of their naked sabres, was a sight our men had not been accustomed to see. Our oldest officers still remember the impression these terrible troops made, and how difficult it was to make the men stand against them, till they had been accustomed to their formidable appearance."

Near the Danube side of the Coronation Hill "Platz "

is a grand equestrian statue of Maria Theresa, with a hussar on one side of the horse, and a Hungarian noble on the other. This beautiful piece of sculpture, by John Fadrucz, which was erected in 1897, is simply and eloquently inscribed, "Vitam et sanguinem."

Pozsony (Pressburg) was not only, until 1848, the meeting place of the Hungarian Diet, but its cathedral was also the crowning place of the Hungarian kings, who after the ceremony rode on to the Coronation Hill by the Danube, and there took the oath of fidelity to the nation, drawing the sword of St. Stephen, and turning to the four points of the compass, making the sign of the Cross with it, and saying, "I will defend my country, wherever it may be attacked, with this sword which the nation has given into my hands."

The town no longer sees these sights, for it was deemed advisable to have the capital further away from the frontier, and so the seat of government was removed to Budapest ; and it was there that the present Emperor of Austria was crowned king of Hungary in 1867. But if we cannot have the spectacle of the king thus publicly taking the oath of fidelity to his country at the ancient seat of government—and the breaking with such traditions has consequences which those responsible can scarcely gauge—we can visit the old cathedral where the actual coronation took place, and can picture for ourselves within that building something of the scenic splendour once visible there.

Here it may be said that it is a curious fact that, as it is at the first Hungarian town that we reach on journeying down the Danube we thus come in touch with the story of the crown of St. Stephen, so we come in touch with it again when we reach the last town before the river passes from Hungary to Rumania.

To happen, as I did, on my first visit upon a busy market day in Pozsony (Pressburg) is to participate in

a scene of animation about which one is tempted to linger. At the top of the irregular market place stand a number of long narrow wagons with basketwork sides, laden with vegetables and drawn by large buff-coloured bullocks. Passing into the crowd of peasants and townfolk, we see wares displayed on stalls or spread over the ground in a glorious confusion of colour. Roughly, the sellers of commodities seem to classify themselves. At one side of the "Platz" are the sellers of bread in many forms, in another part are to be seen rows of boot and shoe sellers, dealers in drapery and haberdashery. Glancing up a court we may notice a buxom peasant woman trying on a pair of high leather boots reaching above the knees. A little beyond are the dealers in fruit and vegetables; great mounds of dark green melons, like large cannon balls, are piled up, and here and there one that has been cut or broken reveals the beautifully contrasting purplish red of the flesh within; broad baskets or tubs tilted to one side show masses of paprika, the national condiment, a delicate red pepper the rare savour of which some visitors fail to recognize. All round are peasants who have brought in their wares, sometimes of the slightest, that they may make something if it be but a few fillers by the transactions; sometimes the wares consist of but a few handfuls of half-ripe beans of various kinds, sometimes of three or four dozen tomatoes, good, bad, or indifferent. From the vegetables, past the vendors of herbs and of flowers, cut and in pots, we come to rows of women selling butter and cream and cheese, and beyond them are stalls after stalls at which ready cooked geese and ducks are being sold whole or by the half or quarter bird, and beyond these again are the butchers' booths. At the lower end of the market place live geese and fowls are being disposed of, while under the acacias that surround a statue sits a circle of women each of

whom has spread upon the ground by her little heaps of various fungi unknown to English culinary art—"toadstools" of all shapes and sizes and colours. These fungi-sellers are a noticeable feature of many of the markets that we visit, but here and at Ratisbon they seemed more numerous than elsewhere. The whole scene is perhaps typical of many of the markets that may be visited, but it was the busiest of those which I happened to see. One is struck by the absence of any marked characteristics of local costume—the various coloured head kerchiefs are much the same as those to be found in places far apart as Bohemia and northern Spain, two dominant notes of colour being "butchers' blue" in the women's gowns, and a warm yellow-brown in the kerchief. Of striking costume but little is to be seen unless the visitor penetrates further from the river highway, or unless he happens upon some special festival.

Though Pozsony (Pressburg) is the second important town in Hungary and the old capital, its closeness to the frontier makes it less peculiarly Magyar in character than towns further inland, and a large proportion of its eighty thousand inhabitants are German. There are, too, judging by one or two of the streets, many Jews in the town, and the fact is further emphasized by the large, new (and ugly) synagogue near the cathedral. The cathedral itself is primarily interesting for its historical association, but its pyramid-topped tower, dating from Roman times and surmounted by the Hungarian crown, is worthy of notice.

One story that is told of a siege of the ancient capital is worth recalling as it suggests a similar incident in a Scots ballad. When King Andrew the First was on the throne in the eleventh century, his kingdom was threatened by Henry the Third, who entered Hungary at the head of a large army and laid vigorous siege to Pozsony

maintaining a strict blockade on every side in the hope of starving the inhabitants into submission. As the attack was wholly unexpected and the townspeople therefore unprepared, it looked as if the invaders' expectation might be realized. But while their force was unable to manage the opening of a passage on the river, their stratagem and the bravery of one man effected it. In the silence of the night a skilful swimmer named Zothmund dropped quietly from the wall into the river and swimming round the enemy's vessels, bored holes in their sides below the water mark, and before the morning the majority of them were sunk, in spite of all the efforts of their crews, so the Emperor was forced to raise the siege. This is very like the exploit of the cabin-boy of "Ye Gowden Vanitie" who volunteered to sink a "French gallie, as she sailed to the lowlands low."

Long connected with the south side of the river by such a bridge of boats as was the common means of communication across the Danube, Pozsony has for some years had an iron bridge which serves for both road and railway. It communicates with the woodland Au-Park, which forms a favourite recreation ground for the townsfolk.

Passing under this bridge, the steamer starts upon a long stretch of country marked by the sameness of tree-grown banks and islets, with for many miles little to vary a certain monotony beyond the passing of quaint water-mills, moored singly or in groups of as many as a dozen, now in midstream and now close to the bank. These mills consist of a small wooden house on one boat, with a large water wheel, the lower part submerged, connecting it with another boat. On the shore are frequent little granaries not much larger than the floating mills, both being common objects of the Danube for many miles. Before we reach them, however, it should be pointed out that arms of the river branch off left and

right a little below Pozsony and do not rejoin the main stream for a long distance. That on the left forms the Csallóköz island or Grosse Schütt—a rich agricultural island nearly sixty miles long, more than thirty wide at its broadest part, and having scattered about it nearly a hundred villages. The right branch of the Danube, which rejoins earlier, forms the Kleine Schütt. These villages are, however, but infrequently glimpsed from the steamer as the island shores along the main stream are broken up into innumerable islets.

Here we are at one of the shallowest parts of the great river's course, and exposed banks are not infrequent when the water is low, while the steamer has to pick its channel now close to the right bank and then close to the left—especially as we pass some of the rapids. The islands are said to be rich in wildfowl—which it is easy to believe when we have seen between Pozsony (Pressburg) and Esztergom (Gran) flocks of many hundreds of wild duck.

The first stopping place in the river's long winding through this plain is Körtvélyes—the steamer station for Somorja (Sommerein) the chief town on the greater island; the next is Bös or Böös, a mere landing place, the town which it serves lying two or three miles inland. Passing the little-varying green banks, broken into islets, with a rare spire seen at a distance over the trees, or an occasional peasant with a small herd of cattle, we reach the end of the smaller of the islands where the river Raba or Raab (with which the Danube branch has united) comes in on the right. The town of the same name, once the frontier town between the Turkish and German empires, is a few miles up that stream—and then, on the same flat and unattractive bank, we reach Gönyö from which local steamers run up to Győr (Raab) an interesting old town, described as peculiarly Hungarian, on the site of the Roman station of Arabona,

now an important manufacturing centre with more than forty thousand inhabitants.

The next place is Komárom (Komorn) a place with about twenty thousand inhabitants, which, though it does not look particularly picturesque from the river, has a long history, as a town that has withstood many sieges. It is now connected with the south bank by an iron bridge about 440 yards long, and is an important military centre owing to its situation at the extreme eastern end of the Csallóköz Island (Grosse Schütt) where the left arm of the Danube united with the river Vág rejoins the main stream. The town, largely hidden by the long Elizabeth Island, round the narrow eastern end of which we turn to approach the landing place, is strongly fortified and has the reputation of never having been successfully besieged, despite the many times that it has been attacked. The boast of its impregnability is typified in the statue of a virgin placed on the ramparts of the newer fortifications with the inscription "Nec arte, nec Marte." An older form of the boast took the shape of a female figure in one of the streets, inscribed with a pun upon the town's name "Kom-morn" or "come to-morrow." The tradition is that when summoned to capitulate the scornful reply of the defenders was "Komme - morgen," which an anonymous versifier rendered thus—

"The walls are manned, the gates are strong,
Advance ye sons of plunder—
They come! The siege is fierce and long,
And loud the rival thunder!
'Yield!' cries the foe—but still in scorn,
Though seemingly in sorrow—
Their answer was—'Who wins Komorn
Must call again to-morrow!'"

Komárom (Komorn) was one of the principal points of the War of Hungarian Independence. Near it a big

battle was fought and won by the Hungarian leader, Görgey, and the Austrians were again defeated at the town by General Klapka less than a month later. During this war, indeed, the place justified its boast of impregnability, for General Klapka not only held it against all assaults but only surrendered the town—and then with all the honours of war—when the cause which he represented was known to have failed. In 1866, when Vienna was threatened by the Germans, the Austrians remembered the place that had stood out so strongly nearly twenty years earlier, and the national treasury was removed thither from Vienna. A statue of Klapka was fittingly erected some years ago.

But this town, strong in its pride as a place of strategical importance in the time of war, has something else that it may boast of, for here was born on 19 February, 1825, the great Hungarian romancer Maurus Jókai—the novelist to whom, more than any other English readers owe such knowledge as they possess of his country and of the character of his compatriots. Komárom (Komorn) will be regarded as one of the chief literary shrines of Hungary, as being the place of Jókai's birth and upbringing, for his reputation became not only national but international, and we look with new interest on the town to which his fame first belongs.

A Hungarian critic, writing in 1898, said of Maurus Jókai: "The number of his works is very great, and although over fifty years have elapsed since the appearance of his first novel (in 1846), he is still enriching Hungarian and European literature with ever new works. Nearly everything has changed in Hungary during the last forty years; but the love and admiration for the genius of Jókai has never suffered diminution. In his chequered life there is not a blot, and in his long career there is not a single dark spot. Pure, manly,

upright as a patriot, faithful and loving as a husband, loyal as a subject, kind as a patron, indefatigable as a worker, and, highest of all, a true friend both to men, fatherland and literature, he has given his nation not only great literary works to gladden and enlighten them, but also a sterling example of Magyar virtue and Magyar honour."

Opposite to Kómarom (Komorn) is the small town of Szöny, with remains indicating a past of some importance in the distant days when it was the Brigetio of the Roman occupation. Leaving the low-lying place of many fortifications—mostly hidden from sight as we journey along the river—with its pleasant river-side promenade, the trees of which successfully mask the walls, we soon find ourselves approaching low hills on the right, which promise that the tedious sameness of this part of the journey is about to be varied, and among which half a dozen miles inland is the beautiful Lake Tata with the towns of Tata and Tóváros and their interesting surroundings, but they lie too far from the river for our present purpose. As we near the rounded hills, the northern portion of the Tata Mountains, some of the marble quarries for which the district is remarkable are to be seen, while a long row of handsome poplars near the shore is a striking feature. At Nezmély (Nesmühl) we reach one of the famous centres of Hungarian wine growing.

Here the river offers a broad expanse of water though far ahead loom the mountains that are once more to narrow its course, and nearer still over the trees on the left bank is to be seen a lofty, domed building.

The winding course of the river soon shows that this Italianate building is really situated on a high bluff on the right bank. It is the cathedral of Esztergom (Gran) which has been more than once spoken of as one of the most beautiful achievements of modern architecture. It

is only appropriate that it should form so striking an object as we near it, for the town is the ecclesiastical centre of the kingdom of Hungary. It was the Archbishop Rudnay who re-established the primacy at Esztergom (Gran) in the early part of the nineteenth century and who is responsible for the magnificent cathedral, which he designed to rival St. Peter's at Rome, and which, commenced in 1821, was completed in 1870.

Yet another appropriate reason for this town's possessing the finest church in Hungary is to be found in the fact that it was here that St. Stephen, the first Christian king and patron saint of the land, was born, and that it was here that he founded an archbishopric in the year 1000.

Esztergom (Gran) was at one time a favourite residence of the kings of Hungary—a magnificent "Calvary" that once belonged to King Matthias Corvinus is shown in the cathedral treasury—but its history also goes back to Roman times, when it was known as Strigonium. On the opposite side of the river—with which it is connected by an iron bridge of over 550 yards—is Párkány and a little beyond, also on the left side, the river Garam (Gran) flows into the Danube. The river winds considerably during the next few miles, and looking back, the magnificent cathedral that we have just passed shows even more strikingly picturesque than as it is approached down-stream—especially when seen against a gorgeous crimson sunset sky. The hills draw together and the scenery once more becomes variedly beautiful. The heights on the left form the termination of out-lying ranges from the Carpathian Mountains. Ahead, the hills seem too close together to afford any passage for the river, which turns abruptly southwards and sweeping round the point doubles into a northerly and then an easterly direction. It is a

wonderfully beautiful bit of the journey—the most beautiful between Vienna and Budapest—all the way from Esztergom (Gran) to Vác (Waitzen). Rounding the point past Dömös, prettily situated among trees on the right, we see ahead of us the ruin-topped height of Visegrád—rich in historical associations. The steamer stops on the left bank at Nagy-Maros (Gross Maros) and looking around at the grandly beautiful scenery, we feel that this district is most justly a favourite holiday resort of the people of Budapest.

This portion of the river alone, made an English traveller of over sixty years ago declare that the scenery of the Danube “partakes much of the nature of the Rhine, only infinitely superior, from the far greater volume and majesty of its own vast stream, and the more imposing and bolder forms of its rocky banks.”

Nagy-Maros is pleasantly situated, but it owes its chief attraction to the great rocky hill of Visegrád on the further side of the river. Here was an ancient palace of the kings of Hungary, a palace celebrated for its splendour and for the magnificent gardens which one of the monarchs laid out on the mountain-side.

Of this one-time splendid centre of Hungarian Court life in the reign of King Louis (who died in 1382), the late E. L. Godkin in his “History of Hungary,” said: “The Magyar historians love to dwell upon the glories of his reign, and above all upon the splendour of his palace of Visegrád, in which he fixed his residence during the greater part of his life. They tell, with pardonable pride, of its vast extent, which could afford ample accommodation for two kings and many minor princes, with all their suites; of its three hundred and fifty chambers, furnished in a style of dazzling splendour; of its gardens stocked with the rarest exotics, and cooled by the rush of flowing water; of the soft and voluptuous music which every evening, from one of the highest



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towers, soothed or delighted the courtly guests, and floating on the breeze, cheered the peasant as he 'plodded his weary way' homeward; and the neighbouring mountains crowned with wood and studded with pleasant villas and rustic churches; of the pleasant and shady alleys that sloped away to the Danube's edge, and afforded calm contentment to him who chose to escape for a season from the gaities of the palace."

Now, however, the splendid palace is but a group of scattered ruins, and the rocky slopes are largely covered with trees. From the "high fortress"—for such is the significance of its Magyar name—to a ruined tower on a rock by the river, runs a ruined wall reminiscent of Dürrenstein.

It was by King Matthias Corvinus in the latter part of the fifteenth century—one of the greatest of Hungarian monarchs—that Visegrád was largely made the magnificent summer palace of the rulers, but it had been a royal residence for centuries earlier and in the tower near the river—known as Solomon's tower—King Solomon was kept a prisoner by his usurping cousin Ladislas during the early part of the twelfth century. It is said that Solomon owed his release to a miracle; for when the ceremonies for the canonization of King Stephen were being arranged, it was found that no human efforts could remove a great stone from the entrance to Stephen's tomb. A certain virgin, named Charis informed Ladislas that the stone could not be moved owing to the imprisonment of Solomon! The prisoner was released, and lo! the stone was moved with ease, and the canonization of St. Stephen properly carried out. When the triumphing Turks in the time of Solyman the Magnificent, about 1526, after having annihilated the Hungarian army at Mohacs, overran the country, the royal castle was given over to destruction and plunder:—

“How still, how lonely—not a sound
Disturbs the deep repose
That wraps within one dreary mound
The Magyar and his foes.
Here sabres clashed and banners flashed,
And high the crescent flew,
As through the gap the Moslem dashed
With shouts of ‘Allah hu!’”

Visegrád did not survive this visitation of “the terrible Turk,” but having been dismantled was left for time to beautify, and now it remains one of the most impressive of Danubian ruins—impressive from its grand situation and as offering to the sturdy climber a magnificent view.

A gruesome tragedy is said to have taken place in this old castle in 1336, when King Charles was on the throne. That monarch had married a Polish princess, whose brother Casimir, visiting Visegrád, fell in love with a beautiful girl named Clara Zacs. His affection was not returned, and his passion was such that the outraged girl had to flee with her story to the Count, her father. Count Zacs sought Casimir, only to find that he had fled, and rushing into the chamber at which the royal family were at dinner attacked the queen—whom he believed to have aided her brother—with a sabre cutting the fingers off her right hand. The king, who sought to defend the queen, was wounded, when three nobles, rushing in, fell upon the maddened Count Zacs and cut him to pieces. The royal vengeance was by no means satisfied, but seemed to increase by what it fed on; the unhappy girl was compelled to walk through the town having her nose, lips, and fingers cut off, to the cry of: “This is the punishment of traitors!” while her brother was dragged through the town at the tail of a horse until he died. Other members of the Zacs family only saved themselves by fleeing the country.

One traveller declared that he could have filled a

volume with half of the legends told him of Visegrád, on the spot! In these more matter-of-fact days, my inquiries gathered accounts only of the former grandeur of the place as a royal residence, and the story of King Solomon's imprisonment in the tower still known by his name. The massive hill with its rocks showing through the trees, its summit ruins, and its town grouped at the foot, is probably more picturesque than in the distant days when the castle was occupied by kings, and the mountain-side was largely given over to gardens.

Shortly after we leave Visegrád, the Danube forks at the end of the long serpentine island of St. Andreas, only to be reunited about eighteen miles farther on as we near the capital. The steamer follows the left branch and calls at Vác (Waitzen) where the river takes a definite southern turn, and continues in that direction for about three hundred miles. The hills have fallen away from the river again, though they show as a background to Vác (Waitzen) which stretches along the left bank, its eighteenth-century cathedral and prison being prominent buildings. This is an old town which was so entirely destroyed by the Tartars in 1141-42 that it had to be refounded and recolonized, partly by the king Bela IV., inviting German settlers.

Below Vác (Waitzen) the river flows between St. Andreas island on the right and the low land on the left, with no special features to take the eye or hold the interest until Budapest itself comes in sight.

CHAPTER IX

THE HUNGARIAN CAPITAL

“Buda and Pesth,
Where Hope soared high or dwindled in despair
As Cross and Crescent alternating flew,
An ancient race has quickened with new life.”

From the Magyar

THE immediate approach to Budapest by river is distinctly and remarkably impressive. Ahead on the right are seen the heights of the Gellert Hill and of the nearer one on which the royal palace stands, while as we pass under the Margaret Bridge we get a striking view of what is surely one of the most beautiful groups of Parliament buildings in the world. Coming down-stream to Vienna it is only after we have got a certain degree of intimacy with it that we begin to do justice to its fascination. Budapest captures from the outset. Nor are first impressions of delight diminished on fuller acquaintance—for the place grows on us.

And apart from all other natural and civic beauties, those portions of the city along the Danube banks by themselves offer the most varied attractions. We may sit outside an hotel in the morning and see the wonderful effect of light and shade on the splendid royal palace, rising above terraced gardens on the hill on the further side of the river, on the massy Gellert Hill (or Blocksberg) to the left, and over the many buildings at the foot of

the Castle Hill, while away to the right rises the beautiful spire of St. Matthias' church. We may wander along the quayside and inspect closely the long barges with their tiny houses, their high-perched steersman's shelter, their little "gardens" of flowers; we may see the long roofed-in barges with high, curved, carven prows, that look like the foreparts of some ancient galleys; we may watch a throng of busy men, half naked and a rich brown with exposure, bringing up great measures of grain from the barges to be put in sacks, weighed, and loaded on wagons on the quayside; we may idly scan the incessant little paddle steamers fussing to and fro with passengers who prefer this method of crossing the river to making use of one of the various handsome bridges that span the Danube.

At sunset the view of the west side of the river against the coloured heavens takes on new beauty—comparable only in my experience with a sunset behind the Mala Strana, and Hradcany at Prague, as seen from the right bank of the Ultava. And again at night the wonderful sky-line of buildings and hills with myriad specks of light between it and the river forms another attraction. Cross the river and look down from the Castle Hill, from the bastion behind St. Matthias' church, or other point of vantage, and the scene is newly impressive, where beyond the broad river lies the newer of the twinned towns spreading far over the plain, from which the dome and towers of St. Stephen's cathedral, the many spires of the Parliament House, and other prominent buildings, stand out with special distinction.

A magnificent site for a great city has indeed been finely utilized at this point of the Danube, where three towns have been joined to make the kingdom's capital. It is less than forty years ago that Buda and O-Buda on the right bank and Pest on the left were formed into a civic whole; and their names combined in one,

so that we can no longer say with our old traveller, "Pest is the representative of modern reforms, modern ideas, modern architecture, as Buda, on its height, of old aristocratic stateliness and ancient times," but we may still echo him when he says that "the two form a panoramic whole which will scarcely find its match in the world."

The progress Budapest has made within the memory of men still middle-aged is extraordinary. Wandering about its broad streets and squares, its "Ring" streets, and promenades, we are struck again and again, not so much by the old buildings, but by the grandeur and boldness of the new. It bids fair to become a city of palaces—palaces of art and education, palaces of business and industry. Here I am not concerned with the many handsome edifices, the museums and art galleries, but rather with suggesting something of the whole, with telling something of only some of the places, details of which belong to guide-book summaries, and something of the story of the place which, after being the station of a Roman legion, came to be a residence of the kings of Hungary; then was for a century and a half in the hands of alien conquerors, and within living memory has become the residence of the king of the Hungarians, the seat of the Parliament and the Law Courts, and a commercial centre of great and ever-growing importance.

Buda (Ofen) on the right bank, is the oldest part of the great city. It was near here that the only Roman legion stationed in the province of Lower Pannonia had its headquarters; the ancient place as revealed by excavation may be visited, and a small museum of relics seen at Aquincum, a short distance to the north of O-Buda (Alt-Ofen). But of the Roman times there is little to be learnt. Hungarian history may be said to begin with the conquests of Arpád, who in battle

overcame the various princes then occupying different tracts of the territory—all but Zalán, prince of the long strip of country between the Danube and the Tisza, which includes Pest.

What Arpád could not take by force he captured by a trick, for the story runs that after he had failed to defeat Zalán, he sent him rich presents of horses, camels, and slaves, asking only in return a piece of grass from his country, as he wanted to see if the grass was as green as that in Asia, and some water from the Danube, as he wished to find if it was as sweet as that from the Don. Zalán received the envoys well, accepted the rich gifts, and returned the small acknowledgments requested, only to be told that the grass and the water represented all the land along the Danube, which he accepted in return for his presents. Thus towards the close of the ninth century began the rule of the Arpád dynasty that continued to rule in Hungary for about four hundred years.

Except in paintings and sculpture we must not look for any reminders of this distant past in the Budapest of to-day. The church of St. Matthias which was begun in the mid part of the thirteenth century by King Béla IV. contains some ancient tombs, but the remaining links with the Arpáds are few.

It was this King Béla, too, who first built a royal palace at Buda, but the present simple and impressive mass of buildings—since much enlarged and restored—only dates from the reign of Maria Theresa. Here is preserved the old Hungarian regalia—the crown of St. Stephen, orb, sceptre, etc.—of the romantic adventures of which we learn something some hundreds of miles further down the Danube, as we near the Rumanian frontier. The regalia, which is preserved with special care, always guarded by soldiers, and not shown to visitors, was used when Francis Joseph, Emperor of

Austria, was crowned King of Hungary in St. Matthias' church in 1867. After the crowning he carried out on the Esztergom on the Pest bank, the ceremony of waving the sword to the four quarters, and repeating the time-honoured oath which the kings of the country had hitherto sworn at Poszony (Pressburg).

To the south of the Palace rises the great mass of St. Gellert's Hill (Blocksberg) with the ancient citadel. Nearly four hundred feet above the Danube, from the side and summit of this hill are to be had magnificent views, not only over the city outspread below, but also far over the adjacent plain and along the noble river from which the hill abruptly rises. On the hill-side overlooking the town, is a statue of the sainted bishop Gellert, who, having been the first bringer of Christianity to the land, was martyred at Buda in the year 1046.

Nearly two hundred years after the martyrdom of Gellert, King Béla IV., builder of the palace and of St. Matthias' church, found his unhappy country overrun by devastating hordes of Tartars. He sought assistance from neighbouring states in vain, and his own nobles were with him debating what should be done when the terrible news came: "Sire, you and our country are lost. The Tartars have defeated our forces and are quickly approaching." The king called to him one of his friends, and giving him the crown of St. Stephen and other national treasures, begged him to take them to a place of safety out of the country, and then drawing his sword said, "The fate of the nation is in the hands of God, but its honour is in mine. Those who wish to die with glory for their country, let them follow me—but those who wish to live in disgrace can remain at home!" There was ready response to the brave appeal, but it came too late.

Place after place was burnt by the advancing hordes, "and the flames of the burning towns and villages were

already to be seen from Pest." King Béla with a force of six thousand men sought, but unavailingly, to stop the invaders. The king and such of his followers as survived had to seek shelter in caves and in the mountains.

Meanwhile, Pest and other places were destroyed and the people slaughtered wherever the Tartars passed. At length domestic affairs recalled the invaders, and the Hungarian king encouraged the remnant of his people to build their towns, and return to their farms, inviting German immigrants to come and settle in the land.

Nearly twenty years later when another Tartar invasion was threatened, the brave monarch found more prompt assistance, and pushed forward to the Carpathians before the Mongolians could reach the plain. This time the Hungarians won so signal a victory that the enemy, after losing it is said upwards of fifty thousand men, fled back to the East. Looking down on the magnificent city now, it is difficult to realize that distant past, or the past of three hundred years later when the Turks, after long and heroic struggles—after the national Hungarian hero, Hunyadi Janos, had defeated them in ten pitched battles—at length overcame the Hungarians and captured Buda.

For nearly a century and a half—a period in which the country was in a state of perpetual change with rival or usurping rulers—Buda was the centre of an important pashalik ; the crescent flew over the castle, and the church of St. Matthias became a mosque. A relic of the Turkish occupation is to be seen in the small octagonal Turkish chapel over the grave of a holy Mohammedan, Sheikh Gül-Baba, in Buda. When the treaty of Karlowitz was signed in 1699, it was specifically undertaken that this monument should be properly preserved, and thus it is that, more than two centuries after the last pasha was

driven out of Buda, the visitor may still see there a Turkish shrine, may still visit baths reminding him of the day when there was a slave market in the town and the ruling pasha had his harem on the Margaret's Island in mid-Danube.

The Turkish occupation was disputed again and again, and Buda was often, but unsuccessfully, besieged. It was in 1686 that that occupation came to an end, when the Duke of Lorraine, in command of an army said to have been made up of German, French, English and Spanish as well as Hungarian soldiers, stormed this formidable height and took the powerful citadel. The struggle on which so much depended—the capture of Buda meant the expulsion of the Turks from the kingdom—has been summarized thus:—

“Pressed on all sides by the Austrian force, the Turks now craved a suspension of arms, and sent an aga to wait upon Lorraine for that purpose. But the Duke coolly replied, ‘I have but one duty to perform; namely to conduct the war, now declared against the Sultan your master; I will therefore make it my business to attack your general wherever I can meet him. In the meantime, I will despatch your letter to the emperor, who will acquaint you with his pleasure.’ Surprised at this answer, the aga employed every means to shake the Duke’s resolution, and endeavoured to make interest with the officers of his staff. But the only reply was, ‘Such is the Duke’s pleasure, and his mind once made up, no power on earth can turn him aside.’

“Carrying back to the Vizier this stern and uncompromising answer, the aga re-entered the fortress of Buda. A scene of hurried preparation and fearful suspense ensued. The storm was gathering fast around the devoted fortress, and the thunder at last bursting with redoubled fury on its walls, a breach was speedily effected—the Turks fought with desperation; and

retreating from bastion to bastion, poured their deadly shot into the serried ranks of the besiegers. But imitating the example of their intrepid commanders, the Christian host surmounted every danger. Before sunset they took possession of those castled heights, and hoisted the Austrian banner on the tower of the old Gothic church, which still consecrates the spot, and points to the fearful scene of massacre which followed." The pasha in command is said to have been killed "fighting in the breach with a Roman bravery." Thereafter it is recorded the Turks were hunted through the Alföld plain like deer.

When Lady Mary Wortley Montagu was journeying through Hungary, thirty years later than that recapture of Buda, she said that nothing could be more melancholy than "to reflect on the former flourishing state of that kingdom, and to see such a noble spot of earth almost uninhabited. Such are also the present circumstances of Buda, once the royal seat of the Hungarian kings whose palace there was reckoned one of the most beautiful buildings of the age, now wholly destroyed, no part of the town having been repaired since the last siege but the fortifications and the castle which is the present seat of the governor-general."

Presumably, by the castle, Lady Mary meant the citadel on St. Gellert's Hill, the key to the possession of the town. From this hill, as has been said, we get one of the most impressive views of Budapest, though the extensive vineyards, which used to clothe the neighbouring slopes and form a notable item in the prospect have been destroyed by phylloxera. It was from this hill, says the tradition, that Etzel "hurled his offending brother into the Danube."

Possibly it is the dim influence of that tradition, outweighing for a time that of the martyred bishop, which has given rise to another one that I find recorded only

by Dr. Beattie, in whose words I chiefly give it. The sanctity of the spot, according to the authority of the people of the neighbourhood, has not protected it from being an occasional rendezvous for evil spirits! During the awful inundation of 1838, the summit of St. Gellert's Hill was crowded with these unhallowed visitors, and such was their mirth and revelry, whilst from their commanding point they looked down on the perishing city, that peals of fiendish laughter bore testimony to the pleasure with which they viewed the destruction of our race. Afterwards, too—although we do not vouch for the truth of so weighty a charge—it appeared that various astronomical instruments belonging to the observatory had been turned to diabolical purposes; for the first visitor who made use of the glasses after the fiendish appearances, could see nor sun, nor moon, nor stars as hitherto—but in place thereof, he beheld a dance of witches, with Prince Beelzebub at their head—and what was unspeakably worse, with a near and dear earthly relative of his own, acting as chief partner to his Satanic Majesty. Frantic at the sight he shouted out, "Holy St. Gellert! Is that my own wife?" No reply—but down dropped the glass from his hand, and, happily for the sight of others, was broken in pieces! He rushed home; and there, at the hearth-side, sat his wife, rocking their baby in its cradle. But, as he very shrewdly observed, she was greatly flurried and disconcerted. He was, fortunately, a learned man, and having read that edifying author "Adolphus Scribonius de Purgatione Sagarum, etc.," he remembered that this philosopher lays it down as an indisputable fact that witches weigh infinitely less than other persons; for, says he, "the devil is a spirit and subtle being, and penetrateth so thoroughly the bodies of his votaries, as to make them quite rare and light." Now, this thought no sooner struck him than the experimental astronomer

resolved to put the matter to the test, and seizing his wife with both arms, he threw her up almost to the ceiling, and might indeed have done so, it is said, with but three fingers, for in fact, despite her apparent bulk, she did not weigh four ounces! If ever philosopher had just cause to run mad; Herr Reischenschloss undoubtedly had. To the glory of his favourite author his experiment had been only too perfectly successful. When he looked at his wife, the sleeping baby in the cradle, and all the home surroundings, he became quite frantic, rushed out of the house, ravingly related his frightful story to a sympathizing friend, and subsequently found refuge in a public hospital. Afterwards it became a favourite maxim, says the grave historian in the neighbourhood of the hill, that husbands should never consult the stars too closely on "St. Gellert's Eve." It is a story which, for its proper presentation, like an earlier one recorded, calls for the genius of a Thomas Ingoldsby.

Reference at the beginning of this fearsome tale to the inundation of 1838 seems to call for fuller mention. The Pest side of the river is a plain, and in the spring of that year—the Danube having been covered with ice over three feet thick—when the break-up began the country was flooded in a disastrous fashion. At the first menace a breakwater of earth and timber six feet high was thrown up on the river-side all along the town front, but—

" Lo, upon a silent hour,
 When the pitch of frost subsides,
 Danube with a shout of power
 Loosens his imprisoned tides :
 Wide around the frightened plains
 Shake to hear his riven chains,
 Dreadfuller than heaven in wrath,
 As he makes himself a path :

High leap the ice-cracks, towering pile
 Floes to bergs, and giant peers
 Wrestle on a drifted isle ;
 Island on ice-island rears ;
 Dissolution battles fast,
 Big the senseless Titans loom,
 Through a mist of common doom
 Striving which shall die the last." *

Meredith might, when writing his poem, have remembered the awful episode of 1838. When the ice broke, the water dashed through the improvised embankment, until within a few hours it was twenty-seven feet deep in some parts of the city. Street after street, building after building collapsed, until, when the waters went down and the damage could be estimated, it was said that a thousand lives have been lost and over two thousand houses entirely destroyed. Indeed, out of 4255 houses but 1147 were left intact.

"The day of horror, the acme of misery, was 15 March. Pest will probably never number in her annals so dark a day again—she might perhaps not be able to survive such another—the maddened river as that day dawned, rioted in ruin ; and many looked upwards to the clear cold sky, and wondered whether the Almighty promise was forgotten. Thousands of men, women and children, homeless, houseless, hopeless beings, clinging to life, when they had lost nearly all that made life a blessing ; parents and children, and sisters and lovers—the young helpless in their first weakness and the old trembling in their last—the strong man whose weapon was stricken from his hand by a power against which the strongest contends in vain ; the philosopher who in all his abstraction had found no preparation for so hideous a death as this ; the mother whose hope had withered as her babe died upon her bosom, who clung to life

* George Meredith, "The Nuptials of Attila."

rather from instinct than volition ; the fond, the beautiful, the delicately nurtured—all were huddled together during that fearful day, upon the narrow spaces scattered over the town and suburbs, which the water had not yet reached. And, as it wore by, every half-hour added to the devastation around them ; houses and buildings which had survived the first shock, seemed to have been preserved only to add to the horrors of that day. Many of them fell and perished from roof to base ; others became rent by the heavy dashings of the waters, and through the yawning apertures the wasting tide poured in and ruined all it touched ; while, to add to the confusion, in some quarters of the city the heavy barges, which had been procured to remove the sufferers from their threatened houses, broke loose, and went driving onward through the streets on the crests of the foaming waters."

Many of the nobles and other inhabitants devoted themselves to the succouring of their fellows, and a memorial of such service is to be seen on a wall in the Kossuth Lajos Ut, where there is a fine tablet in relief depicting Baron Nicholas Wesselényi engaged as boatman in rescuing sufferers from almost submerged houses.

So great was the devastation that we may well marvel over the energy and determination of the people who set about rebuilding the place. Indeed, it was said when the new Pest began to rise where the old had been ruined that, but for the terrible loss of life, the disaster was a blessing in disguise, so boldly was the new town planned, so solidly were the new buildings designed. Since then it may be hoped that the improvements of the Danube for navigation have also had the effect of greatly reducing the chance of any repetition of such a visitation. Certainly it is difficult to realize any such disaster in connexion with the far-spreading city on

which we look down from any of the heights on the western side of the river.

And it is the river that inevitably draws one ; the river to which this strangely fascinating city owes no small measure of its fascination. Even when we have been up and down its broad streets, and its "Rings" ; have visited the fine museums ; have inspected some of the many statues—Budapest bids fair to become known as a city of beautiful sculpture—have wandered about the attractive Városliget or public park, it is as though we were insensibly drawn back to the Danube ; to the lovely park-like Margaret's Island ; to the fashionable promenade along the left bank, where for a time in the afternoon it is as though everybody in the place walked up and down ; to the quays to watch the ever-attractive operations of lading and unlading the barges, the arrival or departure of the up and down river steamers or the busy traffic of the bridge.

Here, too, as has been suggested, are to be seen some of the finest buildings of a city remarkable for such. Notably, first of all, the beautiful Parliament House, which remains in memory as a wonderful range of spired buildings with something of the delicacy of lace-work ; the substantial Renaissance Academy ; and such palatial offices as the great Gresham building named after the English merchant prince. "To name them all would need" if not a thousand tongues, the small type and concision of a guide book. The handsome bridges form a notable feature of the Budapest Danube—in which respect the river here contrasts strongly with the portion of it that flows past Vienna—and the first of them to be built, the Lánchíd or suspension bridge, is worthy of note as being one of the longest of its kind in Europe, (1227 feet) and as having been constructed (1839-49) by an English engineer, William Tierney Clark. It will be recognized that this bridge was begun the

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very year after the terrible inundation. Its stability has been proved by its withstanding "the shocks of masses of ice, the repeated charges of an attacking army, and the tumultuous crowding of a retreating force"; it is even further said to have resisted the attempts of military engineers to destroy it by gunpowder. This, presumably, was in the War of Independence at the time when it had only just been completed at a cost of over six hundred thousand pounds.

The engineer's choice of a point for his bridge proved to be exactly the same as that selected centuries earlier, for while the workmen were engaged in digging for the foundations of the new bridge they came upon the remains of a solid stone wall, the existence of which was very puzzling until it was discovered on searching the national records that on the very same spot the erection of a bridge had been commenced in the reign of Matthias Corvinus. It, or the old bridge of boats which it superseded, was the scene of a grim tragedy at the outbreak of that war—a tragedy which made the war inevitable—for Count Lamberg having been appointed by the Emperor of Austria as Commander-in-Chief of the Hungarian troops, the Diet refused to recognize the nomination, declaring all who should obey him to be guilty of high treason, and when he arrived at Pest, while crossing the bridge he was dragged from his carriage by the infuriated populace and killed.

Unlike Clark's bridge and the later Francis Joseph bridge which crosses to the foot of St. Gellert's Hill, both of which are supported on two piers in the stream, the graceful Elizabeth bridge, which spans the river between them, does so in a single span from bank to bank. The Margaret's bridge is singular in that from its centre a branch bridge connects it with the southern end of the island from which it takes its name.

Less crowded, less superficially animated than

Vienna, the Hungarian capital delights some visitors far more—though in regard to animation, if we go along the Francis Joseph Quay during the promenade hour, or along the Andrassy Street in the evening, when the cafés are at their busiest, then Budapest may compare in that regard, too, with the Austrian capital. The visitor perhaps feels more at home among the Hungarians than in the social cosmopolis, and that even though some travellers have declared that in Budapest we first touch the Orient. The comparison perhaps becomes the more inevitable in that Vienna is the last great city at which we stay before Budapest, perhaps also because we have here the case of the two capitals under one crown.

There is a feeling of hospitality about Budapest which is increased and fixed by the cordial reception accorded by the people with whom we come in touch. Mr. Arthur Symons, who has, as it were, made a study of the psychology of cities declares that at Budapest "coming from Austria, you seem, since you have left Vienna, to have crossed more than a frontier. You are in another world, in which people live with a more vivid and a quite incalculable life: the East has begun." In his brief account of Budapest he gives a suggestive summary of the impression of that river-side promenade which, as I have said, is one of the abiding memories of the fascinating city: "To the stranger Budapest hardly exists beyond the Ferencz-Josef Rampart along the river, which has at all hours an operatic air, as of something hastily got up for your pleasure, and with immense success. Well-dressed people walk to and fro upon this cheerful boulevard, with its trees, cafés and flags; little trams run smoothly along it between you and the water, with a continual, not unpleasant agitation; steamers pass on the river. At sunset every point of the abrupt hill opposite is detailed in sharp silhouette

against a glowing sky, out of which the colour is about to fade ; the whole uninteresting outline of the palace, seen under this illumination, becomes beautiful. Lights begin to star the two hills, the hill of the citadel and the hill of the palace, sparkling out of the darkness like glow-worms ; lights come out along the bridge and strike the water like gold swords. Some charm is in the air, and a scarcely definable sense of pleasure, which makes one glad to be there. One has suddenly been released from the broad spaces, empty heights, and tiring movements of Vienna, in which, to the stranger, there is only the mechanical part of gaiety and only the pretentious part of seriousness. Here, in Budapest, it is delightful to be a stranger ; it is as if a door had been thrown open, and one found oneself at home with bright strangers. Idleness becomes active ; there is no need for thought, and no inclination to think beyond the passing moment." *

Those closing sentences sum up, in so far as it can be summed up, much of the impression that we bear away with us from Budapest. Though, perhaps, Mr. Symons somewhat too narrowly limits the impressions to those that remain of the Danube-side promenade, along with it one's memory dwells upon the views from the right or Buda bank ; upon the broad streets ; upon the beautiful horses, which in every thoroughfare remind us again and again of the equine display in our Hyde Park drive when society in the season takes its airing ; upon the palatial buildings and upon the delightful Városliget (People's Park).

Those who know anything of the heroic tragedy that makes up much of the history of Hungary, should not fail to visit the extensive and well laid out cemetery (Kerepesi Köztemető) with its memorials of the illustrious dead. There is the handsome Kossuth Mausoleum

* " Cities," by Arthur Symons.

in which was buried in 1894 the remains of one of the chief leaders of the revolution. Louis Kossuth, who died in exile at the great age of ninety-two, had refused to accept the Compromise of 1866, from which his country may be said to date its renaissance, and never returned to Hungary after the tragic failure of the War of Independence. His stern republicanism—possibly, too, his defeated ambition, for there are not wanting critics of the man—memorials to whom are to be seen in every town—could allow of no compromise with the Habsburg dynasty.

Some of his fellows were more far-sighted, and among them Francis Déak, who, no less sincere in his patriotism, worked untiringly at home as a simple citizen to bring about the welfare of his country by peaceful methods, rather than by any further appeal to the arbitrament of arms. Though much blamed for his share in the Compromise, Déak may be regarded as one of the chief agents of the renaissance. When at the time of the coronation of Francis Joseph as king of Hungary, it was proposed that Déak should accept a high position, he replied with a simple dignity that "It was beyond the king's power to give him anything but a clasp of the hand."

The Déak Mausoleum stands not far away from that of the fellow-worker who, though with like aims, would have chosen other methods than his for their attainment. Not far from the Kossuth memorial, too, is that of Count Louis Batthány, another of the leaders of the revolution and first constitutional Prime Minister of Hungary.

It is not surprising to find when we talk to an enthusiastic Hungarian—and the spirit of the country, so far as a visitor can judge, seems worthy of the patriots just named—to hear in many words what the Bostonian put pithily when he declared that his town was the hub

of the universe. On the first night of my first visit to Budapest I happened upon one of these enthusiasts. He told me (and after disclaiming any regard for mere patriotic sentiment) that Budapest is without exception the most beautiful of all the great capitals of Europe ; the city with the loveliest river front ; the city in which all great improvements in civic amenities had been tested. Where, he asked, was the first road-tunnel made? Where were arc-lamps first used as street illuminants? Where was the first electric underground railway run? Where was the conduit system for electric tramways first employed? And in every instance he triumphantly answered his own queries with the same syllables—in Budapest. Where, he went on, could be seen such luxurious cafés? Where such magnificent stone-built business premises? And he paused triumphantly where, though it was near midnight, great insurance offices were being built—men and women labourers busily engaged by artificial light—to point out that it was all “stone upon stone.”

CHAPTER X

BUDAPEST TO BELGRADE

“ Past wooded isles, and cornlands fair,
By fields of ancient wars
The river through the Alföld plain
Its mighty volume pours.”

From the Magyar

THE long stretch of the Danube, where it flows south and then south-easterly from Budapest to Belgrade, contrasts greatly with the more beautiful scenic portion of the river's course above Budapest. From the ever-varying mountains and valleys, the rocks and vineyards, we pass at once into the great Hungarian plain, through which the river finds its tortuous way for hundreds of miles. In the downward steamer the journey is one of about twenty-four hours, and those travellers who cannot reconcile themselves to a thoroughly restful day of progress, are recommended—even in Budapest itself—to “skip” this portion of the river and journey by railway to Zimony.

There is, however, a fascination in a flat country, though a river rarely affords the best point from which to experience it. Properly speaking, the Alföld, or great Hungarian plain, of about thirty-seven thousand square miles, lies to the left as we go down the Danube. Its main river—the chief river entirely Hungarian—is the Tisza (Theiss), which for nearly three hundred

miles runs roughly parallel, at a distance of about sixty miles, with the greater stream into which it flows.

This great Alföld which is at an average height of between three hundred and three hundred and fifty feet above sea-level, is the most extensive plain in Europe, and passing over parts of its surface, unbroken but by groups of trees, occasional villages, or clusters of farm buildings, with far-stretching expanses of maize, wheat, or other crops, one who knows the western continent is reminded again and again of the settled prairies of Golden Canada. Differences are, of course, noticeable as soon as we study details, but the general impression is the same.

Mile after mile we journey through this richly cultivated country, but the railway journey right across it, or the glimpses of it which we get from the river, give but an inadequate impression. It is necessary to leave the neighbourhood of the railway, to visit remote villages or isolated farms, to gain an adequate idea of it; and to come in touch with the people to learn something of the fascination which their country possesses for them. That fascination is, however, widely reflected in Hungarian literature, as Mr. Louis Felbermann has abundantly shown in his history and description of Hungary. In the work of one of the leading lyrical poets of the country, Charles Kisfaludy, we have a pathetic expression of the *nostalgia* felt by the exiled Alfölder—

“ Oh ! lovely boundaries of my native plain,
Shall I behold thee, dearest spot, again ?
Where'er I turn my steps, o'er vale or hill,
My longing glances turn towards thee still.

I fain would ask the bird upon the wing
Dost thou some memory from my country bring ?
I fain would ask the flying clouds the same ;
The whisp'ring zephyrs seem to breathe its name.

Can they console me? No, they only start
 The brooding sadness in my lonely heart ;
 Like a poor orphan do I wander now,
 O'er wither'd grass upon the mountain's brow.

Belovèd cot, where I beheld the light,
 How can I live when thou art not in sight?
 Just like a leaf that whirls upon the wind,
 My body drifts—but leaves my soul behind !” *

The national poet of Hungary, Alexander Petófi, has sung of the charms of the Alföld, too, and the following is Mr. Felbermann's literal rendering of a part of his tribute—

“ I love the plains ! It is only there that I feel free !
 My eyes can wander as they please, quite unconstrained !
 One is not confined by barriers.
 The mountain cliffs do not frown down at one like threatening
 objects,
 Throwing about their loudly trickling rivulets as though they
 hold in their grasp a group of noisy chains !
 Let no one say the plains are not beautiful.
 They have their charm. They are like a shy maiden who covers
 her face with a thick veil,
 Though she unveils herself before her friends.
 And the eye is lost in wonder, for it sees a fairy standing before it.
 I love the plains ! I wandered about them on my fiery horse.”

And again from Petófi may be quoted the following prose version as rendered by the same translator—

“ What are to me the wild Carpathian mountains with their pine trees ? I may admire them but not love them. Nor does my imagination wander down into their valleys. Down in the interior of the vast and ocean-like plains, *there* I am at home, and *that* is my world. If I look at the endless plains my thoughts fly far away, and near to the clouds. I see between the Danube and the Tisza the smiling picture of the plains. Under the Fata Morgana sky the herds of the Kuns are

* “ Hungary and its People,” by Louis Felbermann.

grazing near the wells. I hear the tramp of the furious-riding csikós (cowboys) and the clacking of their whips. Near the puszta, in the lap of the breeze, the corn ears are rocking, and with their bright emerald tint they joyfully crown the land. Here come at twilight the wild ducks, which are driven away from their rest among the reeds by the swaying of the wind. Beyond the farms, in the depths of the puszta, stands a lonely Csárda (inn). It is visited by the thirsty *betyars* (tramps), who go to the fair of Kecskemét. Near to the groves of the birches you see the melons glittering in the sands. Here, close by, nestles the bird, undisturbed by the children; here is cultivated the maidenhair plant and the blue cornflower, and the lizards come to take shelter from the broiling sun under their roots. Far away, where the sky touches the earth in mist, the blue orchards are to be seen. Behind them the spires of the churches of the distant towns stand out in dim fog-like streaks. You are beautiful, Alföld! At least you are beautiful to me. Here I was born and cradled, and here I would have my eyelids closed, and my tomb raised."

The poet's wish was not realized, for he fell at the battle of Segesvár (Schassburg) in Transylvania, in 1849, and was buried in an unnamed grave. Of the Alföld which he loved, we get, as has been said, but glimpses passing down the Danube. In the autumn when the maize is being harvested we may see great mounds of the cobs, already husked before leaving the field, like hillocks of gold awaiting removal, or may see long wagons, drawn by wide-horned oxen, bearing golden loads to the granaries.

Again and again, too, we shall see the curious poles which mark the wells, and form a common characteristic feature of this lowland scenery. On the top of a tall perpendicular pole is another, placed transversely; from the thin end hangs a bucket, while the other end has

either the trimmed stump of the tree of which the pole is formed, or else something heavy bound to it, to afford a counterbalancing weight when the bucket is drawn up full. A well of this kind is seen by each of the low white cottages or tiny farmsteads that we pass, and by them, too, are frequently seen little "granaries," of the same size and shape as those to be seen in the north of Spain, but plainer in design.

If, however, there is a certain sameness about the river scenery from Budapest to Zimony (Semlin) and the neighbourhood of Belgrade, it is by no means unattractive; and on the journey we pass some places that are intimately bound up with the fortunes of the Hungarian kingdom, including a spot at which that kingdom received a crushing blow in one century and avenged it in the next. Just below Budapest the river branches, forming two streams along the island of Csepel, which is about thirty miles in length. Numerous water-mills are again seen on the river, both here and lower down—largely used, presumably, for the grain grown on that rich long strip of the Alföld, that lies between the Danube and the Tisza (Theiss). The steamer stops at several places not calling for special mention.

A little below Budapest we pass on the right a château, once the property of Prince Eugène—presumably part of the great inheritance which that celebrated "Mars without a Venus" bequeathed to a niece. Below this, at Nagytétény, are some ruins; while further along, at Erd, is a relic of the Turkish occupation, in the form of a strong tower. Some distance below the southern end of the Csepel island is Dunaföldvár on high ground, and beyond here the Danube, though maintaining its southerly course, winds tortuously through broad marsh lands. About forty miles west of the Danube, as we near Dunaföldvár, lies the great lake Balaton (Platten See).

From Kalocsa, some distance inland from Nszód, on the left bank is a short branch railway line to Kis Körös, the birthplace of Alexander Petófi.

When Lady Mary Wortley Montagu journeyed with her husband to the near East, they went from Vienna to Budapest and thence to Belgrade by the land route, refusing to wait until the Danube had thawed that they might travel by boat. "Almost everybody I see frights me with some new difficulty. Prince Eugène has been so good as to say all the things he could to persuade me to stay till the Danube is thawed, that I may have the conveniency of going by water, assuring me that the houses in Hungary are such as are no defence against the weather, and that I shall be obliged to travel three or four days between Buda and Esseek, without finding any house at all, through desert plains covered with snow; where the cold is so violent, many have been killed by it." After she had passed over this stage of her journey, she wrote, "this part of the country is very much overgrown with wood, and little frequented. 'Tis incredible what vast numbers of wild-fowl we saw, which often live here to a good old age—and undisturbed by guns in quiet sleep."

It must be remembered that the "desart" through which she passed was part of the track of the conquering Turks, and though some time had elapsed since their final expulsion, the country had by no means recovered. Now the "desart" is largely settled, and away on the left we have some of the richest corn lands of the kingdom, but still in the marsh lands we have evidence of the continued abundance of wildfowl. Indeed parts of the river below here are regarded as a happy hunting ground for sportsmen and naturalists. A careful botanist, by the way, has pointed out that while only forty-four per cent. of the flowers of the Danubian plains are perennials, there are as many as

ninety-six per cent. in the Alps. If we are able to leave the river-side, we shall see in autumn about the roads of the Alföld—frequently mere cart-ways worn across the flat land—an abundance of fine giant mulleins, white daturas, bright blue chicory, and yellow toadflax, while from above the stretching acres of maize will be frequently seen great sunflower disks, suggesting that the plant has become acclimatized to the point of self sowing.

The principal town of importance on this long south-running portion of the river from Budapest to Zimony is Mohacs—the most important, at once in point of size and as a centre of historic significance. Here, on 29 August, 1526, was fought the disastrous battle which made the Turks masters of Hungary ; and here the Turks were finally defeated, and so driven out of the kingdom, on 12 August, 1687.

When the Turks threatened invasion in the first-named year, King Louis of Hungary sought in vain to get foreign assistance, for his neighbours were all too busily engaged in defending their own interests. Louis then ordered a general rising to arms of all people “by sending round a bloody sabre to every house, in accordance with the ancient Scythian custom.” The gathering place was named as Tolna, some distance further up the river, near the right bank, and thither the prelates and nobles brought such forces as they could gather. When King Louis came to marshal his troops, he found that he could command but about twenty-six thousand men, and those but ill-armed and badly equipped. And the Turkish army, led by Solyman, was two hundred thousand strong and flushed with victories further east. It is said that the Hungarians—heroic in the circumstances to the point of foolhardiness—made light of the odds against them, though some of his cooler advisers suggested that King Louis should retire to the citadel of Buda.

The archbishop Tomori, who was one of the leaders, thought that battle should be joined at once, and after the two armies had confronted each other on the plain by Mohacs for three days, he ordered the advance, having placed the king, surrounded by a chosen body-guard, in the rear. The charging cavalry routed the first of the enemy's battalions, and the king was at once told that the Turks were flying, and recommended to bring up his reserve to the pursuit. Louis galloped forward only to find the chief part of his army broken by the main body of the Turks under Solyman himself.

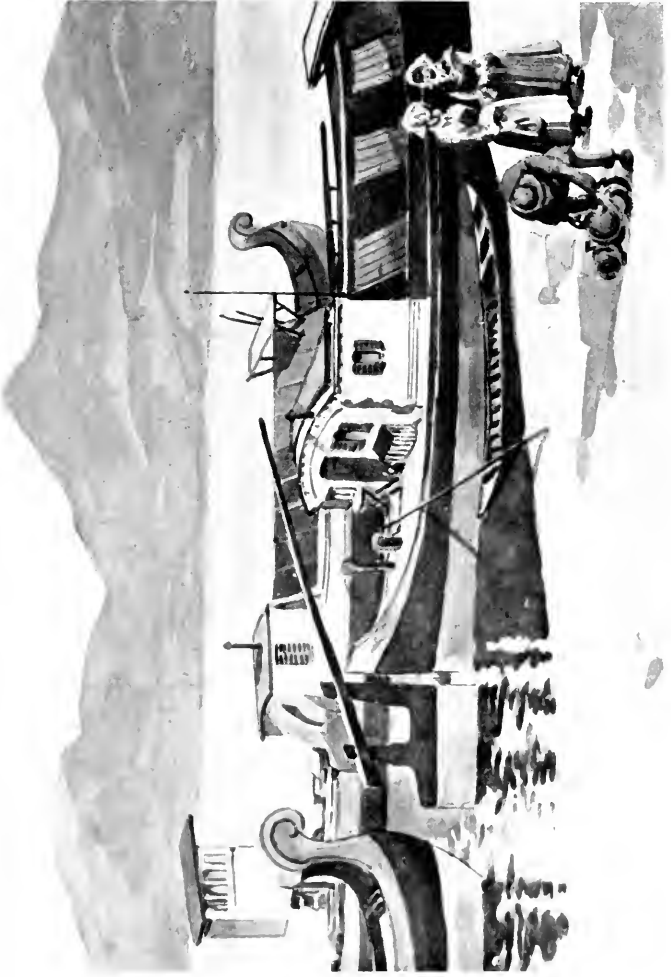
The Hungarians fought heroically, but their army was practically annihilated. Over twenty-two thousand men were left dead upon the field, including the ecclesiastic general Tomori, seven bishops and twenty-eight of the highest nobility of the land. All was lost, and the brave young king had to gallop off with a few friends. Crossing a marshy stream, his heavily caparisoned horse sank in the morass, and struggling to get to the bank, fell back upon its rider. A nobleman who had led the way, turned back to his sovereign's assistance, drew him from the marsh and unbuckled his armour—but the defeated king was mortally injured and died shortly after. Before his disconsolate followers could bury Louis, the pursuing Turks came up with them, and they had to flee. Two months later the corpse was found and interred at Székes-Fehérvár (Stuhlweissenburg), an old royal town between Buda and the lake of Balaton (Platten See).

The conquering Turks swept the country after this decisive battle—"such was the terror inspired by their atrocities, that mothers killed their children and husbands their wives, to prevent them falling into their hands alive. Wherever they passed they left nothing behind but a howling waste, without food or shelter for living creature." The battle of Mohacs has been described as even more disastrous to Hungary than was that of

Flodden Field to Scotland. It decided her fate, not only in the sense of placing much of the land under Turkish dominion for generations, but in placing her also at the mercy of her Austrian neighbours. Not only did the country lose the flower of her manhood on these Mohacs plains, but the conquerors are said to have carried away over a hundred thousand prisoners. At the second battle of Mohacs, following on the recapture of Buda, the Turks were finally defeated, leaving on the field, it is said, sixty-eight guns, six hundred tents, and dead "sufficient to form quite a hill."

The town of Mohacs lies on the right bank of the Danube, and has little beyond its battle associations to claim attention. The fact that it is a centre of the Hungarian coal industry and a river port, gives it its modern importance. Unless we have time and opportunities for journeying inland, there are few places on the long stretch of the river which we are now following that specially invite the traveller to stay. The journey continues on through low country, now between reeds and rushes, past woodlands or willow-grown banks, with occasional glimpses of villages, but nothing that, in the broad view which we have here to take, calls for special notice. Again and again branches of the river go off, enclosing islands of various size—opposite Mohacs is one of these, about twenty-five miles in length, known as the Margaret Island, and near the further end of it, at Bezdán is the beginning of the seventy-four mile canal, which connects the Danube with the Tisza (Theiss) and forms a short-cut water-way between Budapest and Szegedin — the Alföld town to which the gondola-prowed grain barges that we saw at the capital belong. From that canal a branch goes off to Ujvidek (Neusatz.)

Near the next stopping-place, Apátin, is a relic of the Roman occupation of the Hungarian plain, in the



BOATS FROM SZEGEDIN



form of an embankment extending from near the Danube to the Tisza (Theiss). This "Römerschanze," about twelve feet high and twenty broad, served to enclose an extensive tract which, with the Danube on the west and south, and the Tisza on the east, must have been a fairly impregnable position in the olden times. At Drávatorok (Draueck) the broad Drave flows in from its distant source in the Tyrol. Nine miles up the latter stream is Eszek (Essegg), the "Esseek" of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, who tells us that "the bridge was esteemed one of the most extraordinary in the world, being eight thousand paces long, and all built of oak." From the influx of the Drave, the long, southerly course of the Danube, which despite its myriad tortuosities has been maintained from above Budapest, is changed, and the river flows to the south-east.

At Gombos—where the river is about 1080 yards wide—is a steam ferry, connecting the railways on either side. On the opposite or right bank is Erdöd, with a picturesque ruined castle. Continuing through a rich agricultural plain we pass Dályai, and at Vukovár, a town of over twelve thousand inhabitants, reach the centre of one of the chief Hungarian fruit districts—with many plum-orchards and vineyards. (Hungary exports dried plums to the value of over half a million sterling each year, while the national spirit, Slivovitz, is prepared from plums.) Here the Danube trends more directly to the east, and for some distance flows more or less parallel with the Save, which runs at the further side of the range of hills we see to the south.

These hills form the Fruška-Gora notable for their vineyards, the produce of which makes the famous Karlowitz wine. While on the left side the country continues flat, on the right are low cliffs. Ujlak (Ilok), on a rocky height, one of the most picturesquely situated places along this part of the river, is interesting

as being on the site of the Roman Cuctium, and possessing remains of that distant past. Since then it has been occupied by the Quadii, the Magyars, and the Turks. In the monastery here lived the warrior-monk, John Capistran, who fought under the banner of John Hunyadi at the siege of Belgrade; here, too, he was buried, "his body being lowered into an almost bottomless well by the monks, in order that his remains might never, in any future incursions of the Turks, be disturbed and dishonoured by his enemies the infidels." Opposite, on the left bank, is Palánka. As the river nears the foot of the hills on the right, the scenery becomes more attractive and more varied. Soon is seen ahead the famous fortress of Pétervárad (Peterwardein). After passing Kamenitz on the right, we soon reach Ujvidek (Neusatz), a large and pleasant old town, which is an important centre of the Alföld trade. Here the Danube has turned northerly to sweep round the little peninsula on which stands the fortress that has for some time formed a notable object in the view. Here the Danube is crossed by a bridge of boats (eight hundred feet long), such as was, well on into the nineteenth century, the ordinary means of communication between towns on opposite sides of the river.

Pétervárad (Peterwardein) which, from its situation, has been dubbed the Gibraltar of the Danube, consists of a large fortress on a rock about two hundred feet above the river, with a small town below it. It owes its importance to its strong, isolated situation and its position at the end of the old military frontier established or revived by "King" Maria Theresa, a frontier tract, all the male population of which had for three weeks out of every month to take military duty in guarding the land from any attack on the part of Turkish neighbours.

The town owes its present name—it is believed to have been the Acuminicum of the Romans—to the fact

that it was here that Peter the Hermit marshalled the people whom he had gathered together in 1096 to take part in the first of the Crusades. The picturesque story which tells of Peter wandering through Europe riding on an ass and preaching the Crusade—as being, indeed, the originator of the great religious movement of the Middle Ages—is doubted by modern historians, but it is one that tradition will not willingly let die.

Gibbon tells us how, about twenty years after the Turks had taken Jerusalem, Peter visited the holy sepulchre and, moved by the position of the Christians in the holy city, exclaimed, "I will rouse the martial nations of Europe in your cause." The historian tells us of the Hermit that "his stature was small, his appearance contemptible; but his eye was keen and lively; and he possessed that vehemence of speech, which seldom fails to impart the persuasion of the soul. . . . From Jerusalem the pilgrim returned an accomplished fanatic; but as he excelled in the popular madness of the times, Pope Urban the Second received him as a prophet, applauded his glorious design, promised to support it in a general council, and encouraged him to proclaim the deliverance of the Holy Land. Invigorated by the approbation of the Pontiff, his zealous missionary traversed, with speed and success, the provinces of Italy and France. His diet was abstemious, his prayers long and fervent, and the alms which he received with one hand he distributed with the other; his head was bare, his feet naked, his meagre body was wrapped in a coarse garment; he bore and displayed a weighty crucifix; and the ass on which he rode was sanctified in the public eye by the service of the man of God. He preached to innumerable crowds in the churches, the streets, and the highways; the hermit entered with equal confidence the palace and the cottage; and the people, for all were people, were impetuously moved by his call to repentance

and arms." The first Crusade was known as the People's Crusade, and it was probably a motley mass that the Hermit gathered together here before his numerous company set out on its disastrous enterprise. Most of those who did not fall en route, in plundering raids and other wayside troubles, left their bones to bleach on the soil of Palestine. All that we have of that tragic episode here at the Danube fortress, is the memory of the Hermit enshrined in the name of the place.

As a military centre Pétervárad (Peterwardein) has seen its share of fighting. In that unhappy year, 1626, it was captured by the Turks, and remained in their possession until after the second battle of Mohacs.

Between Pétervárad and Karlowitz on 5 August, 1716, Prince Eugène won a signal victory over the Turks, who had broken the Treaty of Karlowitz, made some years before. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu crossed the battlefield some months later, and writing to Alexander Pope, said, "The marks of that glorious and bloody day are yet recent, the field being yet strewed with the skulls and carcasses of unburied men, horses, and camels. I could not look, without horror, on such numbers of mangled human bodies, nor without reflecting on the injustice of war, that makes murder not only necessary, but meritorious." It is said that thirty thousand Turks were slain in this battle.

From the fortress is to be had an extensive view over the low-lying country through which the Danube here flows, of its broad stream, and of the wooded islands formed by its branchings, while to the south are the beautiful hills and woodlands of the Fruska-Gora. After the river has turned southwards again, looking back over the winding course of the stream, the Gibraltar of the Danube remains long visible. Karlowitz, the next stopping place, on the right bank, is not only celebrated as having given its name to the wine of the district, but

is a point of historical importance as that where the Treaty of Karlowitz was signed in 1699. That treaty, which removed the Turkish frontier to Servia, and by which Austria acquired the greater part of Hungary and Transylvania, was signed in a building above the town, where now stands the chapel of Mariafried.

The scenery here is pleasantly diversified, with its wooded and vine-grown hills, while the river is broken up by many islands. At Slankamen, on the right, is an obelisk commemorating a defeat of the Turks in 1691; a little beyond, on the left Tisza (Theisseck), is situated at the confluence of the Danube with the greatest of its tributaries—the Tisza (Theiss), which, rising in the Carpathians, flows for about seven hundred and fifty miles west and south, through the great Hungarian plain of the Alföld to its junction here with the Danube. As we approach Zimony (Semlin), its Millenary monument and castle remains are to be seen on the hill above it, while beyond we get a glimpse of the towers of Belgrade.

At Zimony (Semlin) we reach the last Hungarian town on the right bank of the Danube—a town which as a frontier station has been, and is, a place of some importance. From where the Drave flows into the Danube to where the Save comes in just below Zimony (Semlin), is the eastern boundary of the old kingdom of Croatia, now incorporated with that of Hungary. Largely masked by trees, much of the town is hidden from the water, and when we get into it we find in its low white houses, its shops and larger buildings a blending, as it were, of east and west. Two-thirds of its inhabitants are described as German, and the rest are mainly Croatian and Servian. Its small market square, a little distance from the quay, with its booths on which clothes, beads, and cheap jewellery, fruit, vegetables and meat are exposed, offers an animated scene. Here, too, are said to be many gipsies, and here, in the hotel

court-yard, is one of the few places in which I heard one of the gipsy bands for which Hungary has long been famous.

The gipsies (*zigeuner*) have given their name to the lofty hill, the *Zigeunersberg* by the Danube side, on which are the ruins of the castle of Hungary's chief national hero, John Hunyadi (whose name in its Hungarian form, Hunyadi Janos, is familiar all the world over as that of a medicinal mineral water!). The hill should be climbed for the view it affords far over the Danubian plain; of the broad flowing Danube, where it is joined by the seemingly greater Save; of the valleys of these two rivers; and of the towns and roofs of the "White City" of Servia—Belgrade. It is a magnificent view, and while contemplating it we may well remember something of the famous hero who lived in the old-time castle hundreds of years ago—within sight of the town before which he had repeatedly shown his prowess in fighting the Turks in days when the Crescent threatened to dominate a large part of Europe.

Though the historians tell us that Hunyadi was the son of a small landowner, popular tradition gives him a more romantic origin, for the story runs that his father was no less a person than King Sigismund. It is said that the king, being in Transylvania, became enamoured of a beautiful young woman, Elizabeth Morsiani, to whom he presented a ring, saying that if she ever brought it to the palace, he would fulfil the promises which he had made "to load their child with honours." Some months later Elizabeth married a Wallachian nobleman, and soon after gave birth to a son, to whom was given the name of Janos or John. When King Sigismund had his camp in the neighbourhood, Elizabeth visited him, showing the child and the ring, on which occasion the king renewed his promises, and told her to go to Buda, which, after her husband's death,

she did. One day little John was playing with his mother's ring, when a crow flew down and carried it off. The boy, we may be sure, cried out, when the king, who happened opportunely to be passing, heard him, shot the bird, and was greatly astonished to recognize the token which he had given the Transylvanian maiden some years before. On finding out who the boy was, the monarch adopted him, gave him a military education, and when he grew up, gave him the estate of Hunyadi, in Transylvania, and many villages, and granted him as his coat-of-arms a crow carrying a ring in its beak. Thus it was that John acquired his surname, and also the nickname of Corvinus, which is most frequently associated with his son Matthias. This is one of several versions of the romantic story which has grown up about the fame of Hungary's national hero—the man who in the fifteenth century saved the kingdom again and again, who again and again drove back the tide of Turkish conquest. Gibbon says of him that "the idea of a consummate general is not delineated in his campaigns. The White Knight [Philip de Commines calls him the White Knight of Wallachia] fought with the hand rather than the head, as the chief of desultory Barbarians, who attack without fear, and fly without shame; and his military life is composed of a romantic alternation of victories and escapes. By the Turks, who employed his name to frighten their perverse children, he was corruptly denominated Jancus Lain, or the wicked; their hatred is the proof of their esteem; the kingdom which he guarded was inaccessible to their arms."

Though divided from each other but by a short branch of the Danube, which here forks round the large War Island, and the broad Save, Zimony (Semlin) and Belgrade differ greatly in appearance and character. From the tree-surrounded Croatian town at the foot of its green hill, we pass on to the Servian city with the

pleasantest of anticipations, for Belgrade from the Zigeunersberg is remarkably picturesque with its fortifications and other buildings on the river-side hill, and the towers and roofs of the main part of the town showing beyond. But our anticipations are not altogether realized, and it is with something of disappointment that we wander about the town of warlike and tragic memories.

Arriving at Belgrade, we are for the first time made aware of the necessity of carrying passports. To be exact, passport formalities have to be gone through twice—once on the quay at Zimony before we are allowed to embark, and secondly at Belgrade, before we are permitted to get any further than the police office. Leaving the quay-side on the Save, to which the steamer has brought us, we may take one or other of the steep streets up into the central part of the town; perhaps the best method is to follow the road to the left, and so reach the Kalemegdan Park, on the citadel hill, whence we get good views over the two rivers and the town, and may recall the distant times when the citadel of Belgrade was a kind of key fortress in the long struggle between the Turks and their northern neighbours; when it was occupied now by Turks and now by Magyars.

Here Hunyadi Janos for a time was commandant, and here when the Moslems held it, he fought for its recovery; here, too, when a huge Turkish army encompassed the place, came Hunyadi again with the warlike monk Capistran, and with a much inferior force, compelled the investing army to raise the siege and retire to the south. The Sultan, Mahomet II. had attacked the place with an army of two hundred thousand men on the land sides, and with a powerful flotilla from the river, and the Christian population had given up all hope, when Hunyadi appeared with such a force as the preaching of Capistran could bring to the task of

upholding the Cross and expelling the hated Turk. So fiercely did the Hungarian army attack the Turkish boats, that they seemed to carry all before them, and the waters of the Danube are described as having run red with blood. Before the day ended thirty thousand Turks are said to have been slain, Belgrade was relieved and the besiegers in retreat.

The importance of the strategic position at the junction of two great rivers, and with an outlook towards the great plain on the north, seems to have been recognized in early times, for the Celts are said to have first raised fortifications on this rocky summit in the third century before our era. By them it was named, and for a thousand years it remained, Singidunum—during which period it was successively in the possession of the Romans, the Huns, Sarmatians, Goths and Gepids, and then again in that of the Romans. In the eighth century the Franks, and in the ninth the Bulgarians, secured it, and held it until the eleventh, when they were evicted by the Byzantine Emperor Basil II. The Hungarians, under King Stephen, conquered it, to be followed by Greeks, Bulgarians and Hungarians again. In the fourteenth century it seems first to have fallen into the hands of the Servians, who later ceded it to Hungary. Then it was alternately occupied by Hungarians and Turks during the long period of their intermittent warfare, while later Austria and Turkey held it by turn for brief periods. Austria captured it in 1688 to lose it two years later, again in 1717 to hold it until 1739, and yet again in 1789 to lose it in 1792. Then it was Servians and Turks who alternately disputed the mastership, and it was only in 1866 that the Turks finally gave up the citadel. It was presumably the Austrian attack of 1789 which was commemorated in the wonderful alliterative verses, the opening lines of which have become so popular that

they almost deserve inclusion among our nursery rhymes. The lines, which were written in 1828 by the Rev. B. Poulter, Prebendary of Winchester, are not widely familiar *in extenso*, and may therefore be appropriately quoted when we are regarding Belgrade as a much-besieged city :—

“ An Austrian army, awfully arrayed,
 Boldly by battery besieged Belgrade.
 Cossack, commander, cannonading come,
 Deal devastation ! dire destructive doom ;
 Every endeavour engineers essay,
 For fame, for freedom fight fierce furious fray ;
 Gen’rals ’gainst gen’rals grapple—gracious God !
 How honours heav’n heroic hardihood ;
 Infuriate, indiscriminate in ill,
 Just Jesus, instant innocence instill !
 Kinsmen kill kinsmen, kindred kindred kill.
 Labour low levels longest, loftiest, lines ;
 Men march midst mounds, motes, mountains, murd’rous mines.
 Now noisy noxious numbers notice nought,
 Of outward obstacles o’ercoming ought ;
 Poor patriots perish, persecutions pest !
 Quite quiet Quakers, ‘ quarter ! quarter ! ’ quest.
 Reason returns, religion, right redounds,
 Suwarrow stop such sanguinary sounds !
 Truce to thee, Turkey, terror to thy train !
 Unwise, unjust, unmerciful Ukraine !
 Vanish vile vengeance, vanish victory vain.
 Why wish we warfare ? Wherefore welcome won
 Xerxes, Xantippus, Xavier, Xenophon ?
 Yield ye, young Yaghier yeomen, yield your yell.
 Zimmermann’s, Zoroaster’s, Zeno’s zeal
 Again attracts ; arts against arms appeal.
 All, all ambition’s aims, avault, away !
 Et cætera, et cætera, et cætera.”

The town which may thus be regarded as one of those which have been most often besieged—I cannot say if it holds a “ record ” in this respect !—has little to show of its varied past. Its important buildings are comparatively few and modern, and though the capital of a



BELGRADE.



kingdom, it has something of a provincial air about even the broadest and busiest of its ill-made thoroughfares, with their many little shops, their small old houses close neighbouring less small new ones. The white baggy trousers, the white coat, and the conical black Astrakhan caps of many of the people, give something of a new character to the place, and the market with the women with their bright head-kerchiefs, the men with their conical caps and sheepskin coats, the swarthy gipsies, and the abundance of colour supplied by fruit and vegetables, form one of the pleasantest memory pictures of the Servian capital.

Yet somehow there seems a want of cheerfulness about Belgrade, as though the sense of tragedy yet remained from the murder of King Alexander and Queen Draga eight years ago. The palace in which that dynastic crime was perpetrated has been pulled down and a new residence for the present ruler erected near its site.

An incident recorded in the letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu suggests that there is something in the air which leads to such tragic coups. She says that shortly before her arrival at Belgrade the pasha had fallen under the displeasure of his soldiers "for no other reason, but restraining their incursions on the Germans. They took it into their heads from that mildness, that he had intelligence with the enemy, and sent such information to the grand Signior at Adrianople; but, redress not coming quick enough from thence, they assembled themselves in a tumultuous manner, and by force dragged their Bassa before the Cadi and Mufti, and there demanded justice in a mutinous way; one crying out, Why he protected the Infidels? Another, Why he squeezed them of their money? The Bassa, easily guessing their purpose, calmly replied to them, that they asked him too many questions, and that he had

but one life which must answer for all. They then immediately fell upon him with their scymitars (without waiting the sentence of the heads of the law) and in a few moments cut him in pieces. The present Bassa has not dared to punish the murder; on the contrary, he affected to applaud the actors of it as brave fellows."

It was but a short stay that I made in Belgrade—possibly with a longer sojourn it might "grow" upon one, and the chief impression retained is that of its wonderful situation at the confluence of the two rivers. To that situation it owed its past importance as a strategic point and therefore its prominent position in the military annals of the neighbouring countries, and to it it will owe no small share of its probable future importance as a commercial city. Those visitors who are not the victims of a holiday time-table would probably find Belgrade a delightful centre for excursions into the very beautiful country which lies within easy reach of it both in Servia and Croatia.

From where the Inn joins the Danube at Passau to where the Save comes in between Zimony and Belgrade, we have had on the right bank the frontier of the Roman provinces of Noricum and Pannonia—provinces which, according to Gibbon, embraced the great stretch of country more or less enclosed by the three rivers named, and later became divided up into Austria, Styria, Carinthia, Carniola, Lower Hungary, and Slavonia.

CHAPTER XI

BELGRADE TO ORSOVA

“ . . . Kazán's stupendous rocks,
Where eagles eyry in the heights above
And the dark Danube pours it flood below.”

From the Magyar

FROM Belgrade, the Danube, though with many bold windings that now and again give us the impression that the river is turning sharp corners, follows a general easterly course until it passes beyond the Hungarian frontier. Here we are journeying between two Roman provinces, that of Mœsia on the right which is now Servia, and that of Dacia, the only province established by Rome beyond the Danube which is now part of Hungary. Here, too, it may be mentioned the river was known to the Greeks as the Ister, the main stream being regarded as that of the Save, which rises near the confines of Istria.

Leaving Belgrade, we pass between the citadel-topped hill and the tree-grown War Island. When we reach the broad main stream again, the left or Hungarian bank, broken into islands, continues flat and thickly wooded with low greenery. On the Servian side are bare rounded hills which, as we near them, are seen to be dotted with red-roofed white houses and patches of crops. A tandem team of oxen may be observed ploughing a steep and stony hill-side that appears too precipitous for cultivation. Through a break in the

hills we get a glimpse of the higher mountains of the Balkans.

Leaving the Servian capital early in the morning, the autumn sunrise as we pass between these greatly contrasting banks is peculiarly beautiful. White mist, irradiated by the golden light, affords constant change of view as the steamer passes through varying banks of it. The mist appears, indeed, to rise and fall, as now we go through a thick veil, and now have one or the other and again both shores clearly visible. As the sun rises higher and the mist disperses, wisps of it appear to rise columning up from the surface of the water.

An hour or so below Belgrade, where the river has attained a width of about a mile and a quarter, we reach on the left, opposite a large island, the mouth of the Temes, one of the Alföld rivers, which flows down from Temesvár. Here is the landing place for Pancsova, a considerable lowland town, which stands about three miles up the Temes. On the Servian side nearly opposite, is Vischnitz, and some distance below we pass Krotzka, the scene of a disastrous battle between the Austrians and the Turks in 1739. Austria had joined with Russia in her war against Turkey, and the Austrian army, advancing from Belgrade, here encountered the enemy, and were defeated with such great loss that they were compelled to sue for a peace, by which they had to restore to the dominion of the Sultan, Belgrade, Orsova, and other territories which they had acquired by an earlier treaty.

The first stopping place of the steamer on the Servian shore is Semendria, a town of old-time importance which is indicated by the extensive ruined fortress right on the river-bank. This fortress—some idea of the size of which may be gathered from the fact that it has eleven massive castellated towers along the town-side wall—is sometimes described as Turkish, but is said



OLD TURKISH FORT, SEMENDRIA



to have been originally established in the first half of the fifteenth century by the Servian prince, Georg Branković on the site of an earlier Roman stronghold. The many Servian, Turkish and other costumes noticeable among the crowd under the trees on the bank above the landing place, give a touch of Oriental colour to the scene.

As we leave Semendria and pass a number of beautiful tree-covered islets, four steersmen are again found necessary to control the wheel, owing to the swiftness of the stream. As the river nears the end of the ten-mile-long island of Ostrovo—said to be the scene of Maurus Jókai's romance "Der Goldmensch"—we pass the influx of the Servian river Morava.

An interesting scheme has been formulated for regulating the waters of the Morava, which flows northward, and those of the Vardar, a stream which rises on the southern side of the same watershed, and connecting the two streams by means of a canal, so that a new waterway should be established, 382 miles long, connecting the Danube at this point with Salonika on the Ægean Sea.

Several small towns are passed, but nothing that makes a special impression to vary the general one of the broad river, the low hills and trees, until on the right we see the bold ruins of the Servian fortress of Rama. Beyond are quarries, and then high hills of sand—broad expanses, bare and clean as the desert, forming a curious contrast to the tree-grown slopes immediately beyond. Ahead, the view is shut in by the hills of a spur of the Carpathians.

On the left the ground becomes hillier, and at Bázíás we reach a small quaint village on a low hill-side—a village the quaintness of which is not to be recognized from the steamer, for the steamer-quay and railway yards and station occupy the foreshore. Those who pause here

will find the little village—built so closely on the rock face that the houses above those on the single, strangely uneven street are reached by narrow paths, hung with wild clematis and other climbers, and series of steps—reminiscent of Clovelly, though widely different from its Devonshire equivalent. Glimpses into the balconied yards of some of the houses, with their flowering oleanders, suggest Italy. The view of the broad river and the bare hills of Servia from above the village, or from the Kossuth memorial stone on the steep bank, is particularly pleasant.

From this little place—terminus of a railway from Temesvár—begins the wonderful Danube-side road that continues thence, through all the gorgeous scenery which we are nearing, to the Rumanian frontier. A short walk along this road from Básiás shows the rocks to be peculiarly rich in wild flowers, offering endless delight to the botanizer. This road is known as the Széchenyi road, having been made by the Hungarian government during the years 1834–8 at the instigation of that Count Stephen Széchenyi to whose patriotic zeal modern Hungary seems to owe no small degree of the impetus which has made it as a nation re-born.

The inquirer into the history of modern Hungary is for ever coming across one or other of the practical things by which this nobleman sought at once to emphasize the solidarity of the Magyars and to initiate works that should be of permanent value to the nation. To him is owing in no small measure the rehabilitation of the national language, to him is owing the foundation of the Hungarian Academy, to him was owing the first putting of a regular line of steamers on the Danube, and to him we owe this road which is carried through all manner of obstacles for about a hundred miles, a road, innumerable inviting spots along which we see as we travel down the river.



BAZIAS



Michael Quin, who published a narrative of "A Steam Voyage down the Danube" from Budapest, in 1835, visited Count Széchenyi, saw the progress of the road-making, and heard the Count described by the one Englishman employed on the work in most enthusiastic terms: "he was in the bloom of life; had served in the army; was a leading member of the Diet, over which his talents, his superior acquirements, and his disinterested patriotism, gave him great influence; was constantly occupied in devising plans for the welfare of Hungary; remained a bachelor in order that he might be more at liberty to travel about for the purpose of carrying those plans into execution; and was now actively engaged in superintending the works going on upon the Danube, which were entirely the result of his public spirit, and his indefatigable perseverance." Széchenyi deserves to be widely known in the ranks of the truest "heroes of peace."

Below Básiás the scenery rapidly improves as the hills increase in height and approach more closely to the water, as the river finds its way through the gorges of the Southern Carpathians. Fruitful valleys and upland pastures are seen as we are borne along our way—more especially on the Hungarian bank where, doubtless, the road has proved a serviceable link between the river-side villages and towns, and now affords them access to the railways at Básiás and Orsova.

The first stopping place beyond Básiás is Gradiste, a one-time fortress, on the Servian shore, near the mouth of the gold-bearing stream, the Peck, and the next is Ó-Moldova, on the left bank. The prefix "Ó" signifies old, and Uj (or New) Moldova, with copper mines, is some miles inland. Some distance along here, above one of the small villages, a mine is seen high on the hill-side.

Near Ó-Moldova is an island of the same name, at

the further end of which the Danube is nearly a mile and a third in breadth, but beyond which it so rapidly narrows that, within little more than a mile, it has decreased to about a fifth of that width. Here, among lofty rocky mountains, we are in a centre of romance and of legend. To a craggy rock, standing about twenty feet above the water that eddies round its base, attaches a story of love and revenge; the ruins of Galambócz (Golubacz) on the left, and of Lászlóvár on the right, remind us of the days when these were rival fortresses, guarding what was recognized to be "the key of the Danube"; while a great event in legendary history is said to have taken place near here.

First we may pause to learn the romantic story attaching to the Babakáj rock, standing boldly up from the water. It is a story of love and revenge, with a fulness of detail not often attaching to these local legends—a crowding of incidents that a novelist might expand into a volume. The following version is summarized from that of Dr. Beattie. A Turkish pasha who held a command on the frontier in the early part of the eighteenth century, having been absent for a time, returned home to find that Zuleika, one of his seven wives—and the fairest of the seven—had eloped with a young Hungarian nobleman. The wrathful pasha, eager for revenge, offered his favourite janissary ten purses of gold if he could overtake the fugitives, and bring back the fair one and the head of her lover. The janissary set off in pursuit, and came in sight of the party just as it was crossing the frontier. The Hungarian, unaware of the pursuit, thought himself secure once the frontier was crossed, and dismissing most of those who had aided him in the abduction, retired with Zuleika to a small place on the safe side of the frontier. The janissary, having disguised himself and his followers as Servian peasants, craved for an

audience of the brave Hungarian chief that they might beg for justice at his hands for injuries just received from Turkish marauders. They were at once admitted, and instantly throwing off their sheepskin coats, drew their scimitars and cut down the supposed wife-stealer. Running furiously into the divan, they seized, bound, and carried off the fainting Zuleika—with the head of her lover dangling from the neck of the horse that bore her. Thus was she taken back and hurried into the presence of the enraged pasha, whom she had deserted for the Hungarian. The pasha ordered her to be tied in a sack and cast into the Danube, but before his orders could be obeyed he changed his mind, and deciding that her punishment should be more protracted, commanded that she should be taken to the summit of the rock in the river, to be left there to perish, with these last words ringing in her ears—“Ba-ba-Kaj!” “Repent of thy sin!” At great risk to the executioners, the pasha’s instructions were duly carried out, and the wretched creature left to her fate. The pasha gloated over his revenge as he gazed at the head of his enemy and thought of the faithless one famishing in mid-Danube. Little did he dream that he was gloating over the wrong head; that the janissary, in his over-eagerness, had struck down, not the count, who happened to be absent at the time, but, one of the count’s faithful friends. When the Hungarian returned to find his fair lady had just been stolen, and heard of the trick by which the deed had been done, he lost no time in vain mourning, but decided on instant action. He got together all the servants he could, and even before the janissary had reached the pasha with his prisoner, Hungarians and Servians were lying in ambush, ready at any cost to frustrate any plans against the lady’s life. What force could not effect, strategy and patience enabled them to do; and so news was brought to the count of

the doom decided upon for his lady. Thus, as the janissary and his fellows returned from their hazardous employment of placing Zuleika, like a new Andromeda, as a victim to the dragons of exposure and starvation, her lover, like a modern Perseus, was hastening to her rescue in a well-manned barge, creeping along the further side of the neighbouring island. As soon as the coast was clear, the barge was pulled to the side of the rock farthest from the Turkish shore, and made fast with grappling irons, while the Hungarians clambered up and rescued the fair Zuleika. The boat was then worked across to the left bank, and, mounted on swift horses, rescuers and rescued galloped off into safety.

That, however, is not the end. The Turkish pasha declared that his dreams had been troubled with visions of Zuleika's rescue, and to prevent any such baulking of his vengeance he sent his janissary to the rock in the morning with orders to throw the lady into the water. Once more that cruelly faithful servant set out on the hazardous exploit of climbing the rock—to find nothing but the cords which had bound the prisoner to the summit, and some scraps of Hungarian writing! Realizing that the truth would jeopardize his own ten purses of gold and further inflame the pasha's wrath, the man declared that in her agony the prisoner must have burst her bonds and hurled herself into the water, adding, to give vraisemblance to his story, that a part of her dress had caught and remained on a jutting piece of stone. The pasha was content, and was considering how he could best fill the vacancy caused in his harem, when news came that the Imperial troops had reached the frontier and were making war upon his master the Sultan. At once the pasha gathered his forces together and set out for the front, reaching the main army on the very eve of the great battle of Karlowitz. During the fearful carnage of that day the Hungarian noble





sought in vain to encounter the pasha. In the evening, as it happened, the first person brought to his tent was the man whom he had failed to meet during the day! The pasha was mortally wounded, and his last moments were embittered by the knowledge of Zuleika's escape, of her having abjured Islamism and become the wife of her deliverer—the very man into whose tent he had been borne to die!

Such a story seems to fit in with the scenery of the broad river, here rushing to one of the narrower parts of its course. At this rock—which owes its name, Babakáj, to the story just narrated—is the beginning of what is known as the Lower Danube. That this point was recognized as the key of the Danube, is shown by the ruined castles of which mention has been made. That of Galambócz, (Golubacz), which stands most picturesquely on a precipitous rock backed by rugged mountains, is the most remarkable of the ruins we pass in this stage of our journey. It is supposed to occupy the site of an ancient Roman castrum wherein the Greek Empress Helena was imprisoned. The present building is said to have been erected by "King" Maria Theresa, replacing one that had, in the earlier part of the eighteenth century, been the stronghold of a band of Wallachian robbers, under the leadership of a man named Borichom. These brigands are said to have been the terror of the country around, to have fought successfully against disciplined troops five times as numerous as themselves, and when hard pressed could always retire to their impregnable stronghold. Even if the castle had been demolished, they were supposed to be prepared for the emergency by having secret passages through the rocks, leading to otherwise inaccessible caverns, in which they kept stores of provisions, and where they would have been safe from any pursuit. The ruins of Lászlóvár on the Hungarian side, are

insignificant by comparison. Both places were the scene of much fighting in the Hungaro-Turkish wars.

Among the rugged, rocky hills on the left bank of the river here, are a number of caverns, one of which calls for particular mention. It is named the cavern of Galambócz (Golubacz), though on the opposite side from the castle, and in it, says tradition, a mighty contest once took place—no less a contest than that by which St. George slew the dragon! When tradition was first associated with the Danube I cannot say, for in the "Golden Legend" it is recorded that the dragon dwelt in "a stagne or a pond like a sea," near the city of Silene in Libya. But the whole legend of St. George is of the vaguest, and those who claim Galambócz Cavern as the scene of the fight at least bring circumstantial evidence in support of the story. It is said that, having slain the monster in its cave, St. George left the carcase there—and there ever since it has lain putrefying, and providing a perpetual breeding place for an "infinite torment of flies"!

Should any be inclined to doubt the story, they have only to journey thither in the early summer, and they will be able to see the flies for themselves, possibly to feel them. Various accounts of the flies, which are said to resemble mosquitoes, have been published, and one doubter of their dragon origin says that "when the Danube rises, as it does in the early part of summer, the caverns are flooded; and the water remaining in them and becoming putrid, produces this noxious insect." They are so destructive, according to one writer, "that oxen and horses have been killed by them" while "they appear in such swarms that they look like a volume of smoke, and sometimes cover a space of six or seven miles. Covered with these insects, horses not infrequently gallop about till death puts an end to their sufferings. Shepherds anoint their limbs with a

decoction of wormwood and keep large fires burning," as protection against them—as the Canadian prairie farmers light "smudges" to keep off mosquitoes ; "but upon any material change in the weather the whole swarm is destroyed." It is scarcely likely that the Golubacz fly breeds only in this one cavern—but if it should breed in stagnant water along here, it might be well to try the effect of liberal quantities of oil. Blocking the entrance to the cavern is said to have been tried by the peasants many years ago, but, says the record, the insects destroyed the stone and got out !

Along the base of these caverned rocks the Széchenyi road runs, frequently blasted through the stone which hangs beetling overhead, and, where the cliffs are most precipitous, sometimes built up on projecting portions of them. We are here in the first portion of the magnificent scenery which, though varying in character, continues all the way to the Iron Gate below Orsova. "From Galambócz onwards, the scenery presents the same characteristics of wild, solitary grandeur—beetling cliffs shooting up into the sky—the exclusive domain of eagles and other birds of prey, screaming as they wheel in rapid circumvolutions overhead ; vast, interminable forests, that climb the highest mountains and descend into the deepest gorge ; cataracts roaring and leaping from rock to rock ; majestic trees, with the soil washed from under them, and ready to be hurled by the next blast into the river ; others, stripped of their bark, white and mutilated, dashing along with the current, are but a few of the sights and sounds which meet the traveller in this primæval wilderness. Almost the only relieving features are here and there a flock of goats, a rude Servian fishing boat or a solitary herdsman."

Those words were written more than half a century ago. The beetling cliffs, the grand rugged rock faces,

and steep tree-grown slopes and rushing waters remain. The fisherman and goats are yet to be seen, but I looked in vain, both journeying down and up the river, for the soaring eagle, feeling sure that it must be æried in these magnificent heights at the base of which the steamer bears us.

Grand and lonely as it is, though villages and hamlets are passed at no infrequent intervals, more especially on the Hungarian side, it no longer suggests "primæval wilderness"—far less so, indeed, than some of the low-lying stretches between Budapest and Zimony (Semlin). Passing between these rocky walls, the river has narrowed considerably, and the swift current hastens to the cataracts and rapids which have been considerably modified by the gigantic engineering undertaking of improving the channel for shipping. Where, ahead of us on the right, rises an abrupt face of tawny rock, the river suddenly widens into a lake-like form.

This great rock, the Greben, over six hundred feet in height, was partly blasted away for the purposes of navigation. On its face were marks of the old Roman road, of which we shall see something later. Here we are in the rapids, the water foaming and breaking over submerged rock on all sides of us, the steamer's course being marked by occasional floating moored tree trunks. Just beyond the Greben, where we get an almost dramatic change from the narrowed course of the river between the wooded rocky heights to a broad lake-like expanse, we reach what is known as the Little Iron Gate, where the current flows over a series of ridges of rock, giving to the surface a "boiling" character. The hills have somewhat receded here, and on the right bank is seen the small old Servian town of Milanovac, and on the left bank the small village of Svinica, with immediately beyond, a group of ruins on a rocky knoll

close above the water. These are three towers, known as the Drey Kule and said to be the remains of a Roman castle.

The old builders of the stronghold were probably guided in their choice of a site by requiring a vantage point overlooking the river, but the building must also have afforded magnificent views of the broad, troubled waters and of the grand surrounding mountains. The lake-like effect of this stretch of the river is increased by the fact that shortly after passing the Drey Kule the Danube sweeps round in a northerly direction as it approaches the magnificent gorge or defile of the Kazán—the grandest part of the whole course of the river.

In the neighbourhood of the Little Iron Gate, above Svinica, the Danube is over a thousand yards wide, and remarkably shallow. Yet when, in a few miles, we reach the Kazán, shut in by perpendicular cliffs, the river is narrowed to a hundred and eighty yards, and is said to be sixty yards deep. These magnificent masses of rock, some bare and jagged, some densely clothed with trees, form a series of beautiful pictures difficult to describe. At one point, on the right, above the nearer cliffs, rises a bold, bare mass showing white against the blue sky, in shape like Beachy Head—but a Beachy Head with wooded mountains for its base.

Along the foot of the wall of rock on the left, runs the wonderful Széchenyi road, which has opened up the defile that for many centuries was only to be seen from the water. This road winding about, now a channel in the face of the rock, now bending inland to cross a gorge, sets us wishing for time to walk along it, to see the river from the many points it offers, to visit the little villages seen now and again where the mountains open out into small valleys.

It has been said that where the Greben rock was partly blasted away there had been signs of a Roman

road built along the face of it. As we go through the Kazán we are shown points where this road was fixed, sometimes against the very face of the cliff. Where modern engineering, by the use of explosives, has cut a highway along the left bank, the Romans, in making their road along the right one, were compelled to make it of timber, fixing the supports into holes bored in the cliff, and presumably strengthening them with struts—or so it was explained to me by a gentleman of Orsova, who had studied the subject. In places, the marks—a narrow ridge cut along a few feet above high water, and holes in which the supporting beams were inserted—are strikingly clear. This path, where it was taken along the rock face, is said to have been about six feet in width and to have formed a covered gallery. Why covered, I have not seen explained, possibly it was as a safeguard from things falling from above, and if so, is a remarkable parallel with the shed tunnels by which the trains running through the Rocky Mountains of the West are protected against snowslides.

Where the Kazán gorge has widened somewhat, high up on the mountain, the Veterani cavern is pointed out—a place which takes its name from a gallant Austrian general who, in 1682, with a force of four hundred men, gallantly and successfully held it for three months against a greatly superior force. Some years later, in 1718, it was again held successfully by the Austrians, under Major Stein, against Turkish attacks. Though the entrance to the cavern is small, it is said to provide ample accommodation for a garrison of six hundred men, and is believed to have been utilized for military purposes as early as the time of the Roman occupation.

The bare rocks, white and grey, sometimes rising sheer from the deep water, sometimes with steep slopes covered with high beech, oak, and walnut forests; the



THE KAVAN



winding road along the left, successively take the eye and impress the memory with a series of wonderful pictures. At times it reminded me of some of the gorges in the Canadian rockies, in the way in which it presents "in the most striking combination, all those qualities, features and appearances which are the essential constituents of sublimity in natural landscape"; and it is made the more impressive by the knowledge that it has been a centre of the struggles between East and West, that it was one of the routes, the seemingly insurmountable difficulties of which were conquered by the indomitable Romans. We see in imagination the narrow path along which toiling slaves must have passed dragging the heavy boats against the powerful current. History adds its glamour to a scene that is naturally grand.

Near the village of Dubova on the Hungarian side, the Danube reaches its narrowest point for many hundreds of miles—not much wider than it is at far distant Ulm—the bases of the massive rocks reaching so near that as we approach they seem, as above Visegrád though far more grandly, to form the end of a land-locked lake. The passage is reduced to a hundred and twenty yards where the river has forced its way through the rocky barrier here, and looking back, the scene is no less strikingly fine than as we approached. Such a scene as this might well have been in Shelley's mind when he wrote: "I have sailed down mighty rivers, and seen the sun rise and set, and the stars come forth, whilst I have sailed night and day down a rapid stream among mountains"; or when he described—

"The vast ravine whose rifts did pour
Tumultuous floods from their ten thousand fountains."

After passing this narrowest part, the channel begins to widen out immediately. The mountains on the left

begin to fall away, and as we emerge from the gorge we have the Hungarian village of Ogradena on the left, and, opposite, a large tablet, cut on the face of the precipitous rock, which is a direct link with the Roman occupation of this territory nearly two thousand years ago. It is not possible, as the steamer bears us swiftly down the stream, to see the details of the time-worn inscription, which is supposed to commemorate at once the completion of the wonderful river-side road from near Orsova to Galambócz (Golubacz), and the Dacian campaign of the year 103. The inscription—amid much defaced ornamentation—has been read as—

IMP. CÆS. D. NERVÆ. FILIUS. NERVA. TRAJANUS.
AUG. GERM. PONT. MAX. . . .

This tablet seems to bridge the years in a strange fashion; to make more real to us the extraordinary performance of the first of the great civilizing powers of the Western world. The position of this wonderful road of the Roman past indicates that the volume of the Danube waters has changed but little during the lapse of a couple of thousand years, and it makes us marvel "how the Romans by sheer manual labour contrived to open a military thoroughfare along the face of this tremendous gorge." Wonderful as is the Széchenyi road along the left bank, made in days when explosives could be utilized, it is less wonderful than the earlier achievement along the right bank. It was suggested when "the great Hungarian" began his road, that it should have been made along the Servian side, on the course of the old Roman way. But for one or two points—such as the Kazán defile—the undertaking would certainly appear less formidable. Perhaps when Servia becomes more progressive, takes on something of the activity of her neighbour across the river, the work may

be undertaken, and the right bank opened up as the left has been.

Leaving the Kazán, the river valley opens out widely on the Hungarian side, while on the Servian the sloping hills recede somewhat from the river, leaving space for a few cottages dotted here and there among the trees. Some way ahead, the hills are seen again seemingly shutting in the river, with against them, in the middle distance, the towers and roofs of Orsova.

This scattered town, with its broad roads, its tree-grown front, exercises a peculiar fascination over the visitor. It is not particularly beautiful in itself, it has no interest-compelling associations, no buildings of great importance, and yet—it grows on one. It is true that it is beautifully situated near the junction of the river Cerna with the Danube, that the views up towards the Kazán and down to Ada Kaleh, and across the broad swift-running river to the Servian hills, are all fine.

Miss F. M. F. Skene, returning by way of the Danube in 1847 after a number of years spent in Greece, wrote on arriving at Orsova: "There is a certain little town, named Varenna, lying on the brink of the Lake of Como and looking down coquettishly on its own fair image reflected in that pure mirror, which used to be my beau ideal of a quiet retreat, for one wearied of the world and its follies; but as soon as I had seen this little, romantic, smiling Orsova, I abandoned my former favourite, feeling that nowhere else had I seen a spot at once so bright and peaceful. It is assuredly a very lovely place." Echoing the man who was no orator as his colleague was, I feel inclined to say "ditto" to Miss Skene.

Orsova is one of those places possessing the indefinable qualities which we sum up as "charm," though no small part of it is, doubtless, due to its position. The country about it offers goodly variety for the pedestrian. At a short distance from it, may be visited a village

which, though still in Hungary, is entirely Rumanian—a broad street of low white houses, and all the people we meet in the picturesque Rumanian peasant costumes, the women with white blouses decorated with red and blue Slavonic stitchery, with black aprons and closely embroidered belts, from which hang the many-coloured threads of the *opraiya*, meeting the apron on either side, and giving a quaint effect over the white skirt beneath. Then there is the Orsova market—a close-set row of booths near the river, at which all sorts and conditions of things are sold, and where Hungarians, Rumanians, Servians, Turks and gipsies are to be seen thronging. Nearer the river, too, and adjoining the market is a bazaar where the Turks from *Ada Kaleh* dispose of their wares.

While we were there, we learned that an encampment of the *Tsigane* (gipsies) was to be seen two or three miles away, and through the Rumanian village, past grassy levels starred with myriads of autumn crocuses, we journeyed to it. The tents were pitched on a bluff above a nearly dry river-bed, in a newly cut maize field. Among the tents, we seemed taken back to a time before even the Romans came. The men with their long curly locks, their clear-cut Phœnician-like profiles, seemed to take us back to times but dimly known, while the nude children, the primitive tents, suggested that we were not far from the period when "wild in woods the naked savage ran," though these particular "savages" were sophisticated enough to beg with fawning volubility during our stay in their unsavoury encampment.

A few miles inland from Orsova, in a lovely confined valley, is *Mehadia* (*Herkulesbad*)—a celebrated "cure," the hot-springs of which have been celebrated from the times of the Romans.

About a couple of miles to the east—across the *Cerna*—is a remarkable Hungarian shrine, a small



THE CROWN CHAPEL, ORSOVA



chapel approached by a splendid avenue of tall, tapering poplars. This is the Crown Chapel, marking a historic spot. When on the failure of the Hungarian Revolution the leaders had to seek safety in exile, they took with them the crown of St. Stephen and the other regalia, but nearing the frontier they had not the heart to confess the failure of their high ideals by taking the national insignia out of the country, and so sought a wild and lonely spot, still on Hungarian soil, where they dug a deep hole and buried it, each taking a pledge not to reveal its whereabouts without the consent of the rest. Four or five years later, when the national cause seemed hopelessly lost, the whereabouts of the hidden treasure was told to the Emperor of Austria, and the exact place where the precious regalia was buried was found with some difficulty, and the historic articles recovered. Over the spot the Emperor, as king of Hungary, had the small chapel erected. The creeper-clad building stands at the end of a fine poplar avenue at right angles to the road from Orsova to the Rumanian frontier. When I visited it the surroundings had been devastated two or three weeks before by a terrible flood, which had swept down the valley of the Cerna, destroying railway bridges, farms, cottages, and everything in its course. The raised Orsova road had been washed away in great gaps, and all around was muddy desolation. The subsiding waters had left earthy marks some feet up the poplars and other trees, and the grounds about the chapel were deep in soil deposited by the rushing flood, while nearer Orsova so much earth had been swept down by the torrent as to change the position of the Cerna's outlet into the Danube.

The charmingly natural figure of the Virgin and Child in the Crown Chapel was the work of the Austrian sculptor, Meissner, who, having devoted his

life to wordly art, turned at its close to sacred subjects, and died after completing this piece of work. The right hand of the Virgin, having been broken off, has been replaced by the work of an inferior artist.

From near the Crown Chapel the road and railway run closely parallel along the foot of the hills, and on into Rumania. The frontier is formed by the little river Bachna, which flows in through a pleasant valley, and on the further side of this stream is the first Rumanian village of Verciorova. The passenger steamer passes between this place and the long island of Ada Kaleh, which forms one of the most interesting features in this part of the Danube. The island lies about three miles below Orsova, and to reach it a long, heavy row-boat must be taken from the little Orsova bazaar, where the Turks come to sell their tobacco, coffee, sweets, and other wares. The Turkish boatmen, aided by the swift current of the stream, soon cover the distance, and landing on the island we find that we have left Hungary and Servia, and are in a veritable bit of Turkey, "detached," as the old maps put it.

It was only in 1878 that Ada Kaleh came under the Austro-Hungarian dominion, and it remains a bit of Turkey enislanded in the Danube, with the broad river rushing on either side of it, and the lonely hills of Hungary, Rumania, and Servia encircling it.

The whole place is an old fort. We pass under a gateway through a thick wall of crumbling rich red brick, and come across similar walls and arches again and again as soon as we wander away from the central bazaar, which consists of four narrow streets, a few Turkish shops for the sale of all sorts of things—largely such "souvenirs" as tourists are expected to buy, which may be taken as indicating that if English visitors are not numerous on this part of the Danube other visitors



A CAFÉ IN ADA KALEH

must come in fair numbers, for they are evidently looked to to play their part in supporting the small population of the island. In the streets, or alleys, we see only men and boys, all wearing the deep-red fez. When we pass by the gardens of some of the houses they are to be seen boarded up with fences of six or seven feet high—as we pass one a tiny Turkish maiden, red-fezed like her brother, emerges and offers a few flowers in a way that suggests that a “tip” is expected—another indication that, though we are the only visitors on the island at the moment, Ada Kaleh has taken on the ways of a “show place” and is on the look-out for strangers.

The bazaar, with its little café tables under the acacias, its red-bricked paths, its low houses washed with brilliant blues and greens, its group of men and boys, its shop-keepers standing in their doorways fingering their “Tespis,” or strings of beads, is a true and interesting glimpse of the Orient. The plain mosque, above one of the battered walls, has little to show beyond a magnificent carpet covering its floor space, though outside is a picturesque roofed-in well, grown closely round with a wealth of vari-coloured convolvuluses, admiring which, in company with a Japanese visitor, I learned that in Japan as in England the flower is known as “the morning glory.” A series of embayed arches under the walls, all of the same crumbling red brick, known as the catacombs, suggest something of the security of the place in the old days when it was a powerful fort. Its military importance is still acknowledged by a small Austrian garrison being kept on it. Despite this evidence of changed authority it remains essentially Turkish.

On one of the gateways of the fortress is a memorial inscription in Turkish, along which have been placed, within recent years, other tablets rendering the

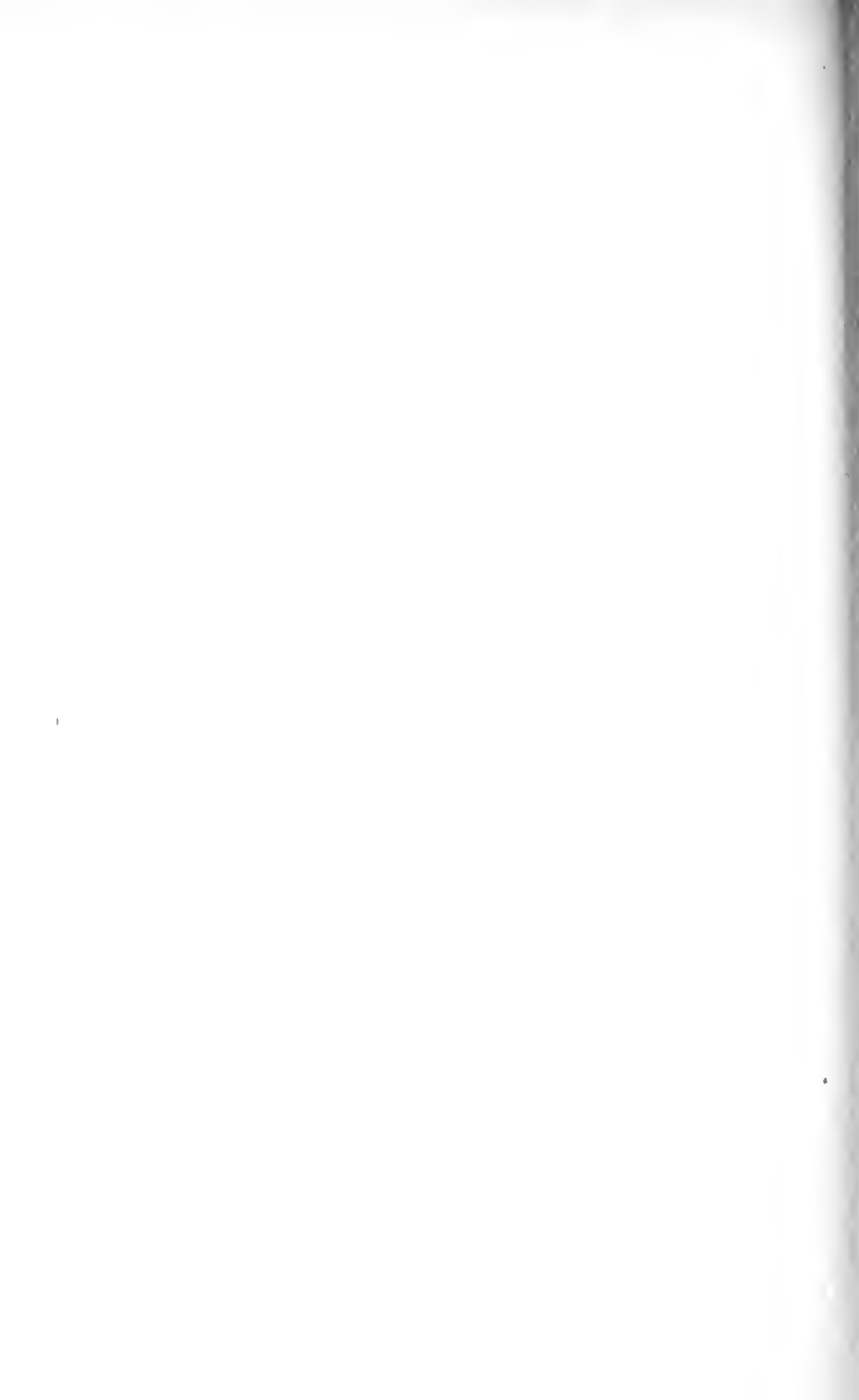
inscription in Magyar and German. It is to the following effect :—

“ Open is the way of glory
 To him who was glorious in deeds
 Similar to those of the old times of heroes.
 His heart was pure and high-thinking,
 His will was great and powerful.
 The defeater and the ruin of the enemies,
 The benefactor and protector of the people,
 His glory was doubled when he conquered this fortress,
 And the frontiers of his country were enlarged
 Greatly as a powerfully running torrent.
 God save him from all evil
 Because he has done much good in the world,
 He whom we are remembering to-day,
 That is to say Mahmud Khan.
 1739.”

When Ada Kaleh passed under the Austro-Hungarian Crown, I am told, the inhabitants wished to return to Turkey, but were induced to remain by the promise that the Sultan should send them each year a shipload of tobacco, coffee, and other commodities. On this annual gift, their gardening, and their fishing, presumably the inhabitants live; they have the privilege of fishing in the Danube from near Orsova to the Rumanian frontier by payment of a merely nominal annual fee.

Those interested in fiscal matters will find in Ada Kaleh a perfect example of a free trade community. There are no customs duties at all—not even on tobacco—and the Turks have the privilege of selling their tobacco, coffee, etc., in the enclosed bazaar on the quay at Orsova. It is the purchasers who have the privilege of paying the customs on that which they have bought at the bazaar before leaving the enclosure. This is a sufficiently clear object-lesson to those who refuse to recognize that duties are paid by the consumer. Indeed,

those who visit Ada Kaleh and ferry across to the bank that they may walk back to Orsova, find a tiny customs house and officers waiting to claim duties on such souvenirs as they may have purchased in the island ; a fez, a pair of slippers, a Turkish coffee cup—all are put in the scales, weighed, and after reference to authorities, are shown to be dutiable, though a quarter of an hour's formalities show that the sum total is but a few pence.



IV
THE LOWER DANUBE



CHAPTER XII

THE IRON GATE TO RUSTZUK

“Broken by masses of submerged rock
The seething waters foam between the hills
In far extending tumult.”

THE Lower Danube begins, officially, at the romantic rock of Babakáj, but in an account such as this, it seems more fitting to make the division some miles further down, where Hungary is divided from Rumania by the little tributary, the Bachna. Not only does the river here flow along another kingdom, but here is also one of the most famous parts of the great river—the celebrated “Iron Gate” which finds mention even in school geography books—mention, but, so far as I can recall, little description. In the manner of one who has acquired a fresh piece of information, since visiting this place—perhaps, by name, one of the best-known natural features of Europe—I have put to many people the question, “What do you understand by the Iron Gate of the Danube?” The answers have mostly been that it was, of course, a narrow chasm, a gorge, a defile, with lofty precipitous rocks on either side. Of those to whom I have put the question only one could give an accurate reply—and he had been there!

The problem—if problem it can be called—is an old one, for a traveller more than half a century ago amusingly prefaced his account of a voyage down this part of the river in the following fashion. He describes

how, having embarked at Orsova, he "proceeded to encounter the perils of the Eisern Thor—the Iron Gate of the Danube—which is so apt to be associated in the stranger's imagination with something of real personal risk and adventure. The 'Iron Gate,' we conjecture, is some narrow, dark, and gloomy defile, through which the water, hemmed in by stupendous cliffs, and 'iron-bound,' as we say, foams and billows, and dashes over a channel of rocks, every one of which, when it cannot drag you into its own whirlpool, is sure to drive you upon some of its neighbours, which, with another rude shove, that makes your bark stagger and reel, sends you smack upon a third! 'But the "gate"?' 'Why the gate is nothing more or less than other gates, the "outlet"; and I dare say we shall be very glad when we are "let out quietly."' 'Very narrow at that point, 'spose?' 'Very. You have seen an iron gate?' 'To be sure I have.' 'Well, I'm glad of that because you can more readily imagine what the "Iron Gate" of the Danube is.' 'Yes—and I'm all impatience to see it; but what if it should be locked when we arrive?' 'Why, in that case we should feel a little awkward.' 'Should we have to wait long?' 'Only till we got the key, although we might have to send to Constantinople for it.' 'Constantinople! well, here's a pretty situation! I wish I had gone by the "cart."' 'You, certainly had your choice, and might have done so—the company provide both waggon and water conveyance to Gladova; but I daresay we shall find the gate open.' 'I hope we shall; and as for the rocks and all that, why we got over the Wirbel and Strudel and Izlas and twenty others, and 'spose we get over this, too. It's only the Gate that puzzles me—the Handbook says not a word about that—quite unpardonable such an omission! Write to the publisher——!'"

This is of course, a somewhat exaggerated account,

but the name of the Iron Gate is likely long to cause confusion in the minds of "visualizing" persons—those who cannot learn the name of an object without forming a picture of the thing named. Such folk, as long as the Iron Gate remains the Iron Gate, will be likely to think of it as a gloomy defile rather than as a fairly wide portion of the river—will associate the name with the confining banks rather than with the rocks in the bed of the river—rocks which during high water are entirely hidden from sight. The great engineering work which has been carried out in regulating the navigation of the Danube, has modified the terror of the Iron Gate so that the long ridges of serrated rock are less of a menace than of old.

Some of this regulating work we saw in the neighbourhood of the Greben. The completion of it—and in some ways the most remarkable portion—is here at the Iron Gate, where along the right bank a "canal" was blasted through the solid rock, to ensure a sufficient channel of water for boats at all times. Before this regularizing, the Iron Gate portion of the river was unusable for about three months of each year. The canal was devised to allow of a minimum depth of nearly ten feet below Orsova, as the upper regularizing work was done to make a minimum depth of six and a half above Orsova. This is not the place, nor am I the writer, to deal with the great engineering feats by which the work was accomplished.

The navigation of the Iron Gate was opened for traffic on 27 September, 1896, in the presence of the rulers of the three kingdoms that meet in its neighbourhood, the Emperor Francis Joseph as king of Hungary, King Carol of Rumania, and King Alexander of Servia, and though the channel was made, as it was hoped, of sufficient width to allow vessels to pass in it, the strength of the current is such that such passing was found to be

impracticable, and vessels, when there is sufficient water, come up-stream outside the canal. During my stay in the neighbourhood there was sufficient water, and nothing was seen of the rocks which, for a distance of nearly a mile and a half, form the Iron Gate. Nothing was seen of the rocks, but much was seen of their action. For the distance mentioned, the surface of the water from the left bank to the outer wall of the canal was one foaming and seething mass, formed by the current rushing against the submerged lines of jagged stone. The effect of passing through this in the little steam launch of the chief engineer in control of the navigation works, is very wonderful. It seems as though the tiny craft would inevitably be battered by the tumultuous waters against some of the invisible rocks; but the steersmen seem to know the waters with unflinching sureness, and it stems the broken current in safety. From the low deck of the launch those "boiling" waters seemed much more formidable than from that of the ordinary passenger steamer, though this, too, having gone on the downward journey through the canal, came back over the cataract portion. When the rocky ridges are exposed at low water, the scene has been described as "the gaping jaws as it were of some infernal monster."

Interesting, even fascinating, in the broad mass of its broken waters, the Iron Gate, despite its traditional importance, is far less grandly impressive than is the Kazán.

The Iron Gate begins immediately below the island of Ada Kaleh—a signal station with a rising and falling globe indicates whether the course through is clear—and as we pass down the canal we get but an imperfect impression of the long-formidable barrier, the dangers of which it has lessened. On either side of us rise sloping tree-grown hills, giving way, as we reach the further end, to curious high sandhills on the left or



THE IRON GATE.



Rumanian side. Borne swiftly along in the steamer, we get but a general effect of the scenery, and may well regret that we have no opportunity of exploring the shores, the wooded hills and inviting valleys. In the past, when even the steamers coming up stream were aided by bands of sturdy peasants towing, travellers were sometimes given opportunities of "stretching their legs" by walking. Miss Skene, who journeyed up the river in early summer in these old circumstances and wrote descriptive letters of her experiences, may describe for us from the land what we see but vaguely from the water :

"On the opposite side, we could only see that it was green, and lovely, and most richly clad, but on the Servian shore where we stood, and feasted our eyes with the details, we might well be enraptured with the scene. We stood on a green lawn, where the short, soft grass looked as though it had been cut daily by some careful hand ; and so thickly was it strewn with the sweetest wild flowers, that no English garden ever freighted the wind with a heavier load of perfume. So profuse and inexhaustible were indeed all the productions of Nature in this beautiful solitude that she seemed to have lavished all her powers in embellishing it, and revelling in the wild beauty she produced, till every inch of ground was bursting with life and vegetation. From the summit of the high hills that rose behind us, down to the very edge of the water, the forests of young wood contended with the young shrubberies, and close over the river, the laburnums and wild yellow roses hung in graceful festoons, till their very blossoms were shed into the wave. Then, as we proceeded to walk on over the rocks, and through the thick brushwood, the innumerable birds that burst from every bush, and scarcely seemed startled at our approach, showed how rarely a human foot invaded their green haunts. At times we

would catch a glimpse of a deer bounding through the thicket, and they tell us that these woods are full of wild boar and bears, as well as game of every description. The sun continued to shine brightly, and we walked for an hour or more amongst this beautiful scenery—the buzzing of a thousand insects in the warm air, the singing of the birds, the innumerable odours from the hill, all seeming to indicate that this was the very domain of a living summer.”

It was autumn when I journeyed down the Danube, but even then, at every place I stayed and along such stretches of the river as I explored afoot, the wealth of flowers was such as to suggest how much greater it must be in spring and summer. And it may be said that, impressive as is the ever-changing panorama seen from the comfortable steamers, the river becomes the more endeared to us the more we can explore of such details as cannot be seen, or can be but glanced at from the water. Certainly much of the Servian shore looks so inviting as to suggest that Miss Skene's enthusiasm was not too fervid.

Shortly after we emerge from between the hills that border the cataracts of the Iron Gate, the hills fall away on either side, and we pass between banks low on the Servian and higher on the Rumanian shores. Small villages are seen, the second of these on the right being Kladova, which is interesting as having been the Roman station of Egeta—the starting point, presumably, of the two important lines of conquest represented by Trajan's road along the Danube bank and by the other which passed north into Dacia from a bridge across the river, some of the bricks of which “are alive at this day to testify.”

This bridge crossed the Danube from the Servian shore, some distance below Turn Severin, a Rumanian town which is presumed to take its name from the scrap

of an ancient tower supposed to have been built by Severinus. Trajan's bridge is described by Gibbon as having consisted of twenty-two stone piles with wooden arches; other writers refer to it as a stone bridge, which seems to be more likely, if it be true that, when it was destroyed by Hadrian with the object of preventing the invasion of the Goths, its ruins stopped the course of the river. Gibbon refers to the river here as being shallow and the current gentle; but it was assuredly rapid enough when I was there to suggest that Apollodorus, the architect, must have had a sufficiently formidable task when he set about building the bridge for Trajan. Only scraps of the bridge-head are now visible. Michael Joseph Quin, who made a steam voyage down the Danube in 1834, appears to have been one of the first of the moderns to fix the situation of the bridge and to describe it. The "Count" of his notes, it may be mentioned, was Count Széchenyi, "the great Hungarian," who was then superintending the making of his great road, and with whom Quin had the good fortune to travel some distance down the river below Orsova:

"On our return to the steamer, some discussion arose as to the exact site of Trajan's bridge across the Danube, which, though recorded in history, had hitherto puzzled all the commentators; as, in fact, no trace of that once magnificent edifice had been discovered for many ages. The Count suggested that, as the river was now so low, there was a chance of our settling the question by a personal examination. Accordingly, we proceeded on foot along the Wallachian (Rumanian) shore, until we arrived at the ruins of an ancient tower, built on an eminence, which had evidently been raised by artificial means. The tower was of Roman construction, and, as we conjectured that it might have been intended as a guard station for the defence of the

bridge, we ascended the eminence with no slight feelings of curiosity.

“Looking down the river, which is here of no very great width, and divided by a sandbank, which, however, cannot be perceptible in the ordinary state of the Danube, we distinctly observed the water curling over a series of impediments extending in a right line from bank to bank. At both extremities of this line we perceived on the land the remains of square pillars ; and on approaching the ruin on our side, we found it constructed of blocks of stone, faced towards the river with Roman tiles, evidently forming the buttress of the first arch of the bridge. In the river itself we counted the remains of six or seven pillars, which had manifestly served to sustain as many arches, connecting the bank on which we stood with the opposite one. No doubt, therefore, could remain that here was the site of Trajan’s celebrated bridge, a marvellous work for the times in which he lived, considering that it had been constructed on one of the most remote confines of the Roman empire.”

There are here but low, crumbly banks to the river, and in parts the water is very shallow. Coming up-stream hereabouts on an early October morning, I went on deck, hoping to see the sun rise over the broad Rumanian plain, but found everything hidden, even the near banks, in a thick fog. The steamer had made an early start that it might pass the Iron Gate as soon as it was clear daylight, and thus get through the Kazán for Zimony (Semlin) before night. The start had been too early, for before the sun was up the vessel ran aground on the Rumanian shore, and stuck fast for two or three hours, while another steamer was sent from Turn Severin to haul it off. Even then we were so fast that the first attempt of the sister ship to tug us off resulted in the snapping of the steel cable. The second attempt

was successful, and when we continued our journey the fog had entirely gone, and under a brilliant morning sunshine the Servian shore, with its villages and greenery, looked particularly beautiful. The Rumanian scenery was almost entirely shut off by the high bank.

Turn Severin, but little of which is seen from the landing place, lies inland, pleasantly situated on elevated ground partly hidden by trees. To reach it, we cross the railway from Bukarest, which closely neighbours the Danube from Turn Severin to Orsova, and pass the prominent buildings of medicinal baths. A town of over eight thousand inhabitants, with a shipyard on the river, it seems to be a growing place, desirous of taking on anew something of its old-time importance, for it is supposed to have been of considerable size in the Roman period. With its public garden, its handsome theatre and other buildings, its cafés, and general air of comfortable prosperity, it is an agreeable town, giving pleasant first impressions of Rumania.

Unfortunately, we reached Turn Severin in the late afternoon, when little beyond a general impression was to be had, for a stay was rendered impossible owing to the fact that our journey down the Danube was taken at a time when a cholera "scare" made landing anywhere beyond the confines of Hungary a matter of difficulty, and staying a matter of impossibility, except to those prepared to undergo four or five days of quarantine before being allowed to travel about. It is certainly well that every precaution should be taken to prevent the spread of disease, but during the scare which synchronized with our journey, the restrictions, once the traveller got beyond Hungary, were such that further progress was rendered difficult. We were only allowed to land and visit Turn Severin as an act of grace, and conditional upon our not staying in the town for the night! The same difficulty, we were told, would

confront us all down the rest of the river, and though we had hoped to reach Sulina on the Black Sea, we had to leave the lower journey through the Danubian plains unachieved and return. To complete the story of the river to its mouth it is thus necessary to rely upon the records of other travellers.

The precautions taken against the cholera, both at Servian and Rumanian landing places, during this "scare" included the spraying of the people who landed with disinfectants. A man with a can on his back like a fire-extinguishing apparatus, and a hose for doing the spraying, was waiting for those who landed on the shore; beside this, at Turn Severin, was a travelling disinfecting engine, in which the travellers' belongings were subjected to treatment. Had time permitted, it might have been amusing to pass the necessary days in quarantine, as it would certainly have been interesting to have had the opportunity of seeing the last portion of the river's course.

From the picturesque point of view, there is something of sameness in the last few hundred miles of Danube scenery—nothing of outstanding beauty or grandeur of scenery is to be looked for below the Iron Gate, though there is an undoubted beauty of its own belonging to a broad river passing through a great and variedly fruitful plain. The chief charm of the lowest part of the journey down the Danube is, however, to be found less in scenery than in the varieties of people to be seen, and the great variation of national costume as the traveller touches at towns in Servia, Rumania, and Bulgaria.

It was at Turn Severin that Prince Charles of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen landed "under a feigned name and with a false passport," from an Austrian steamer, on 20 May, 1866, when he had been called, by an almost unanimous vote of the Rumanian people, to

be their ruler in place of Prince Alexander, who had been forced to abdicate. A conference of the Powers at Paris, had decided that the Prince of Rumania must be a native, but the Rumanians had decided on Prince Charles, and acting on Bismarck's advice, he decided to confront the Powers with a *fait accompli*—hence the secret arrival at Turn Severin, where incognito was thrown off, and the prince was hailed with delight. He has justified the *coup* by proving one of the wisest and best of European sovereigns.

Shortly below Turn Severin the river, after running in a south-easterly direction, sweeps round a curve, until it flows for a short distance in almost the opposite way, bringing into sight again the hills that have been left, and the distant Balkans to the south-west. Divided by various islands and at low water exposing many sand-banks, the river goes on past villages on either side, with signs of pleasant prosperity which suggest that Michael Quin's forecast may yet be fulfilled. When he wrote, the people of Wallachia had largely migrated to Hungary, owing to the continuously unsettled condition of their own land; but he confidently predicted that when the population increased, when their habitations improved and their industry came to be encouraged by the influence of order and the laws, and they should feel themselves safe from the spoliation of marauding armies, then they would be enabled "to convert the whole of that region into a Paradise."

Both Servia and Rumania are largely and progressively agricultural and pastoral countries, and much of the flat country through which the river winds, is pasture and forest. The villages that are passed on either bank do not call for special mention, until, at Kossiak, is reached an important centre of the salt industry, and, at Radujevac, the last town in Servia—for shortly beyond it the river Timok, which flows in from the south, forms the frontier

line between Servia and Bulgaria. Radujevac, the last of the Servian river-ports, is a small town and the station for Negotin, a town lying some few miles to the south, which latter is the centre of a large vineyard district that gives its name to a wine that is said to be particularly good ; indeed the Negotin wine "is exported abroad in large quantities via Radujevac, and after being artificially treated, is often re-imported into Servia, in the guise of an expensive dessert wine."

Beyond Radujevac, before the frontier river, the Timok, is reached, are many remains of old Roman fortifications, reminiscent of the timid and fruitless precautions of Justinian which, said Gibbon, "expose to a philosophic eye the debility of the empire. From Belgrade to the Euxine, from the conflux of the Save to the mouth of the Danube, a chain of above four score fortified places was extended along the banks of the great river." The broadening stream, broken up by many islands, turns south as it nears Widdin on the right, and Calafat on the left bank, places both of them associated with Russo-Turkish warfare. Widdin is an important town, and when occupied by the Turks, was strongly fortified. It stands on low, marshy ground, but in improving scenery, for behind in the distance are seen the rounded summits of a range of the Balkan mountains. The mosques and minarets, which it retains from the time when it was Turkish and the centre of an important pashalik, give it a picturesque appearance from the river.

Widdin is supposed to be one of the places where, in the year 233, Constantine the Great defeated a great gathering of the Goths. In one of the poems of Cynewulf, the fighting on the Danube shore is most vigorously presented ; "Battle was brought against him, the thunder of war ; the hordes of the Huns and the Hrethgoths assembled a host ; fierce-hearted the Franks went forth, the people of Hugas. Spears shone and wreathen mail ;

with shout and ringing shield they flew their battle flags. There were the heroes assembled, openly gathered together—and the throng of folk fared forth. The wolf of the weald chanted his song of battle, hid not his war-runes; the dewy-feathered eagle screamed as he followed the foe. Straight through the cities that mighty battle throng hastened away to war, in hosts as many as the King of the Huns might summon to the fray, of warriors round about. That horde went out, with chosen bands confirmed their forces—till in a strange land on the Danube's rim, stark of heart, those spearmen tarried nigh to the water's surging, with the noise of multitude."

Impressive, indeed, is the long account of the battle between the Roman troops and the barbarian host. One passage may be recalled in the neighbourhood of the contest: "With strong hand the cruel foe dealt forth a shower of darts and spears, their battle-adders, over the yellow shield into the host of the hated. But stout of heart they strode, pressed on as occasion offered, burst through the hedge of shields, drove home the sword and ruthless hastened on. Then was the ensign lifted up, the battle sign before the troops; they sang a song of triumph. Golden helms and lances gleamed over the battle-plain. The pagan peoples perished, without quarter sank in death. And straight they fled away, this Hunnish folk, as the King of the dwellers of Rome, urging the strife, bade that holy tree be lifted up. The heroes were scattered afar. Some the battle took; some held their lives hardly on the armies march; some half-quick, half-dead, fled away into fastnesses, sheltered themselves behind the stony cliffs, held the land round about the Danube; and some were drowned in the flowing stream at the end of life." *

* "The Poems of Cynewulf." Translated into English prose by Charles W. Kennedy (1910).

Calafat, on the Rumanian bank, opposite Widdin, is the terminus of a railway from Bukarest, with a steam ferry to Widdin ; is said to have been founded by the Genoese in the fourteenth century ; and to owe its name to the large number of workmen (*calfats*) whom they employed here in repairing ships. At both of these places are still to be seen trenches and batteries used in the wars of 1854 and 1877 ; in the latter year Widdin was bombarded from Calafat, and in 1885 it was besieged yet again during the Servo-Bulgarian War. The history of Widdin is, indeed, largely a history of warfare from the time when it was the Mœsian Bononia of the Romans ; and it had been besieged many times—thrice in the nineteenth century—before the Servians made their unsuccessful attempt in 1885.

Below Widdin, the Danube turns eastward again, and flows sinuously in that general direction for nearly two hundred miles, before taking its final north-easterly trend. The wide river, with many islands, continues through low land, on the left being the vast Wallachian or Rumanian plain, largely hidden by the islands formed by the river, while on the right it is in great part also flat, though now and again the monotony is broken by higher ground. Lom-Palanka, for instance, a town of about six thousand inhabitants, and the rail-head for Sofia, is described as being beautifully situated on wooded hills, but beyond both shores become monotonously flat and broken with ditches and pools, close-grown with reeds and other aquatic vegetation.

The next place of note, Somovit, on the Bulgarian side, is the railhead of another line to the capital. The railway to Sofia passes through Plevna, which stands about twenty-five miles south of Somovit. Plevna was the centre of the most remarkable incident in the latest Russo-Turkish War, when it was defended in stubborn and magnificent fashion by Osman Pasha against a

mighty Russian and Rumanian army. Twice in July, 1877, did the enemy unsuccessfully attack the town. In September (7-13) they made a grand assault, and were repulsed with a loss of eighteen thousand men. In October, Plevna was formally invested, but Osman held out until 10 December, when he was compelled to surrender. It had taken the Russians one hundred and forty-two days to capture the town, and they had lost forty thousand men in the operation, while the defenders had lost as many as thirty thousand. Those travellers who, after journeying down the Danube, wish to visit Sofia, are recommended to journey thither from Somovit rather than from Lom-Palanka, not only because it gives the opportunity of seeing the scene of historic battling, but because the railway line "runs through a perfect Alpine region."

The next place after Somovit, also on the Bulgarian shore, is Nicopoli, picturesquely situated at the foot of bold cliffs and up the slopes between them. For here the left bank has taken on new beauty, and in front of it the Danube stretches, about two miles in width, its surface broken by a number of islands about which pelicans and various waterfowl abound. Its mosques and minarets remain as indications of the long period that it was a Turkish town, and to suggest something of the past when the Crescent and the Cross fought strenuously together for the mastery.

In 1392, and again three years later, King Sigismund of Hungary captured Nicopoli. Then Sultan Bajazet, the "Thunderbolt," came thither with his army, determined to show that he merited his newly-acquired title. To use Gibbon's words he had "turned his arms against the Kingdom of Hungary, the perpetual theatre of the Turkish victories and defeats. Sigismund, the Hungarian King, was the son and brother of the Emperors of the West; his cause was that of Europe and the

Church ; and on the report of his danger, the bravest Knights of France and Germany were eager to march under his standard and that of the Cross. In the battle of Nicopoli, Bajazet defeated a confederate army of a hundred thousand Christians, who had proudly boasted, that if the sky should fall, they could uphold it on their lances. The far greater part were slain or driven into the Danube ; and Sigismund, escaping to Constantinople by the river and the Black Sea, returned, after a long circuit, to his exhausted Kingdom. In the pride of victory Bajazet threatened that he would besiege Buda ; that he would subdue the adjacent countries of Germany and Italy ; and that he would feed his horse with a bushel of oats on the altar of St. Peter's at Rome. His progress was checked, not by the miraculous interposition of the apostle, not by a crusade of the Christian powers, but by a long and painful fit of the gout. The disorders of the moral are sometimes corrected by those of the physical world ; and an acrimonious humour falling on a single fibre of one man, may prevent or suspend the misery of nations."

In the great Christian host thus destroyed, there was a large body of the Knights of Malta, all of whom, it is said, perished with the exception of the Grand Master, who escaped with King Sigismund in a boat. The historian, it should be added, gives this as the "general idea" of the fighting, but he goes on to suggest that the Christian army was not so large as has been said, and that it was the carelessness of the Christians, no less than the greatness of the Ottoman leader, that gave so signal a victory to the latter, for he continues, speaking of the leaders of the French army, "when their scouts announced the approach of the Turks, the gay and thoughtless youths were at table, already heated with wine ; they instantly clasped their armour, mounted

their horses, rode full speed to the vanguard, and resented as an affront the advice of Sigismond, which would have deprived them of the right and honour of the foremost attack. The battle of Nicopoli would not have been lost if the French would have obeyed the prudence of the Hungarians; but it might have been gloriously won had the Hungarians imitated the valour of the French. They dispersed the first line, consisting of the troops of Asia; forced a rampart of stakes, which had been planted against the cavalry; broke, after a bloody conflict, the janizaries themselves; and were at length overwhelmed by the numerous squadrons that issued from the woods, and charged on all sides this handful of intrepid warriors."

The victory placed the Danubian provinces under Turkish rule, and so may be said to have been responsible for nearly five centuries of that sporadic struggle which only ended after the termination of the Russo-Turkish War in 1878. Again and again was Nicopoli a battle centre. It was besieged once more by the Hungarians in 1444; twice the Turks were defeated here in the closing decade of the sixteenth century. The town was occupied by the Russians in 1810, and in 1829 the Russians destroyed the Turkish flotilla here and stormed the place. In 1877 before the advance on Plevna, Nicopoli was captured and burnt by the Russians, and was occupied by the Rumanians during the stubborn attack on Plevna.

In an old guide book it is recorded that a little beyond Nicopoli is Pellina, a Latin settlement of about two thousand souls, who chose this spot to avoid persecution, to which they, as Christians, were subject in Nicopoli. "As the steamboat passes along, a number of them generally assemble on a hill, having a bishop at their head, and cry aloud, 'Brothers, come to us!' imagining the passengers to be of the same creed as

themselves. The captain returns their invitation by a salute." As I have not travelled this portion of the Danube, I cannot say whether this picturesque incident still occurs. The passing of Turkish rule has long since done away with any occasion for it. Even when Miss Skene journeyed up the river, Christian "Infidels" were sometimes very badly received, for she recorded landing at one place, to which she gave no name (possibly it was Nicopoli), where she and her companions were stoned back to their vessel.

Opposite Nicopoli is the small Rumanian town of Turn-Magurelle, with ruins of a Turkish fortress. The broad river—like an inland sea, as one traveller puts it—flows on past many reedy islands, from which now and again large flocks of pelicans are to be seen, until, beyond a very large island, another Bulgarian place of historic importance is reached at Sistov, a very picturesquely situated town, about the base and on the slopes of a hill surmounted by ancient ruins. These ruins are part of the fortress, destroyed by the Russians in 1810, where the Treaty of Sistov, between Austria and Turkey, was signed in 1791. It was probably here that Miss Skene landed when she got the view of the river described in the following passage. She tells how after "a fortnight's imprisonment on board" the captain's permission to land for half an hour was hailed with delight, and how she and her companions adopted his suggestion of making "for the ruins of an old castle visible on the summit of the hill." Sistov was still a Turkish town, inhabited by a people who looked with disfavour on Christian visitors.

"It was with considerable difficulty that we made our way through the assembled villagers, whose gestures and cries were most expressive of the hatred and contempt with which they regarded us. Happily the steamer and its contents engaged them so much, that we

succeeded in getting clear of the village altogether, by a circuitous road, which was particularly like a road anywhere else, and ascended to the summit of the hill. The ruins were merely those of an old Turkish castle, in no way remarkable, but as soon as we disengaged ourselves from them, and got out on to the open brow of the hill, the view which then burst upon our sight was most remarkable.

“Here was indeed the Danube at last, which till then, seen in detail, and most unfavourably, in its swollen and irregular state, we had never comprehended as the great, the stupendous, the noble river which it is. Springing in the very heart of that Europe, of which it is the great artery, and sweeping along with its silver rolling waters, too vast and majestic to be turbulent, undiminished in volume, unvarying in course from land to land, till now, where we could distinguish it far off in the vast plains that lay around us—it came, turning its mighty stream through the green meadows which it fertilized, and rushing deep and wide, as though it had gathered all the rivers of earth to its bosom, beneath our feet, rolled on away to that wild and stormy sea, whose tremendous billows cannot, even for twenty miles, resist its current. The country, of which we obtained a panoramic view from this spot, was but one succession of fertile plains, but the river was still in flood, and the distance rendered the details of the opposite shore quite indistinct.”

From Sistov to Rustzuk—a distance of about forty miles the Danube flows past the low, reed-grown banks, broken up and enislanded by ditches and small branches of the stream on the left, and past the low, bare hills of Bulgaria on the right, with little to vary the sameness beyond the passing of islands and the sight of some of the waterfowl with which these lower parts of the river abound.

CHAPTER XIII

RUSTZUK TO THE BLACK SEA

“Swol'n by the tribute of a score of lands
The mighty river merges in the sea.”

WHEN Rustzuk is reached, the Danube has attained a width of about two and a half miles, the right bank still marked by low hills, the left still flat and marshy. Rustzuk is a large town of about forty-six thousand inhabitants, having a picturesque appearance from the water, with its scattered houses on the hill-sides, its trees, and the slender minarets which pleasingly vary the lines of other buildings. Long regarded as a place of great strategic importance, the town suffered much during the wars of Turkey with her neighbours. It was bombarded by the Russians from the opposite shore in 1877 ; since Bulgarian independence was assured it has developed rapidly ; and, no longer a fortified place—it was dismantled in accordance with the terms of the Berlin Treaty of 1878—is now an important trading centre, having communication with the Black Sea port of Varna. Though most picturesque as seen from the Danube, Rustzuk is an interesting town, its mixed population affording considerable variety of costume, and its large Turkish bazaar retaining much of Oriental colour.

Opposite, on the Rumanian bank, is the growing town of Giurgevo, situated on flat marshy land. This town, founded by the Genoese in the fourteenth century,

and named by them after St. George, is becoming an important centre for the transhipment of merchandise, having railway communication with Bukarest, and being one of the ports for the extensive grain-growing districts of the country. Though only accessible by steamers at high water, it has another port in connexion with it, little more than two miles further down-stream at Smarda.

During the Crimean War, Giurgevo was so obstinately held by the Turks, that the fortress was not given up before thirty thousand of the besiegers had fallen, and until scarcely a roof was left to shelter the townspeople. It was from Giurgevo that the Russian forces bombarded Rustzuk before crossing the river and making that indomitable attack on Plevna which was even more indomitably withstood.

The country between Giurgevo and the capital, Bukarest, is part of that vast plain which lies to the left of the Danube during most of its course after leaving the foothills of the Carpathians below the Iron Gate. The following description of a drive across this plain, was written before the coming of the railways: "We left Giurgevo at a brisk pace, and commenced our journey across a vast plain, which seemed to be interminable; I never saw such a plain in my life; hour after hour we hurried forward, the horizon never rising an inch, and nothing appearing to vary its straight, unbroken line, whichever way we turned. There was no road, but we followed the track of wheels, lightly marked in the dust, and generally without turning or deviating one iota from its course, which seemed to have been drawn on the globe with a gigantic ruler. Sometimes we would pass through a wood, and occasionally we crossed a river on a bridge formed of unhewn logs. Storks flew heavily from us, and herds of horses, cows, and buffaloes, lazily moved aside as we rushed past them in

a cloud of dust, for the Wallachian drivers are unsparing of their team. We saw only two villages, Bungasko and Roman, at which latter place we crossed the river Ardjish, where the huts of the peasants seemed to be merely square holes dug in the ground with a roof of branches covered with mud, and a door in one end, accessible by a slope cut for the purpose, but also serving to lead rain water into it. . . . After ten hours' drive we reached the gates of Bukarest." *

Below Rustzuk and Giurgevo, the Danube widens yet again, until it is about three miles from bank to bank, though the far-stretching surface of the water is still diversified with many willow-grown islands, and at times with exposed sandbanks. The shores (in early summer) "present a never ending succession of pasture lands, so rich, so verdant, so luxuriant, that one might almost fancy they were the reality of the Indian's dream of Paradise, where the green hunting fields have no end." Tutrakan, a small, picturesquely situated town on the Bulgarian bank, and Oltenitza (whence a railway runs to Bukarest), on the low Rumanian shore, are the next stopping places, after which the river finds its way through a veritable network of islands and marshy tracts abounding in many species of waterfowl, and "greatly beloved by sportsmen in search of game."

It was probably hereabouts that, during the latter part of the fourth century, the great migration of Goths crossed the Danube into the Roman province of Lower Mœsia. The Goths, pressed southwards by the harrying Huns, "an unknown and monstrous race of savages," had appealed to the Emperor Valens and were allowed, under the harshest conditions, to put the great river between themselves and their powerful enemies.

* "The Danubian Principalities: the Frontier Lands of the Christian and the Turk." By a British Resident of Twenty Years in the East (1854).

Gibbon, in the course of a very full account of the movement, says: "the prayers of the Goths were granted, and their service was accepted by the imperial court; and orders were immediately despatched to the civil and military governors of the Thracian diocese, to make the necessary preparations for the passage and subsistence of a great people, till a proper and sufficient territory could be allotted for their future residence. The liberality of the Emperor was accompanied, however, with two harsh and rigorous conditions, which prudence might justify on the side of the Romans; but which distress alone could extort from the indignant Goths. Before they passed the Danube, they were required to deliver their arms; and it was insisted that their children should be taken from them, and dispersed through the provinces of Asia, where they might be civilized by the arts of education, and serve as hostages to secure the fidelity of their parents. . . . The imperial mandate was at length received for transporting over the Danube, the whole body of the Gothic nation; but the execution of this order was a task of labour and difficulty. The stream of the Danube, which in those parts is above a mile broad, had been swelled by incessant rains; and in this tumultuous passage, many were swept away and drowned, by the rapid violence of the current. A large fleet of vessels, of boats, and of canoes, was provided: many days and nights they passed and repassed with indefatigable toil, and the most strenuous diligence was exerted by the officers of Valens, that not a single barbarian, of those who were reserved to subvert the foundations of Rome, should be left on the opposite shore."

In a great number of barrows scattered about the Bulgarian hills below Rustzuk, some travellers have recognized relics of this great migration, which was to cost Rome so dear. These barrows, it is said, "are of

Gothic origin ; and if opened would most probably disclose the same contents as those in Britain—such as bones, armour, pottery, ornaments and idols. Their appearance on these wild hills, with the unchanged soil and aspect of the surrounding country, forcibly recalled our minds to that period when its plains were occupied by the Northern hordes, all ready to burst the feeble barrier of the Roman empire, then fast declining. Here

‘ Tombs sentinel the plain,
Itself a tomb that undulates with dust.’”

The next place of importance below Rustzuk is Silistria, “the citadel of the Danube,” about sixty miles further down-stream, and this, too, like other of the Bulgarian towns along the Danube side, has long been notable as a fortress, “forming, as it does, with Rustzuk and Shumla, a connected triangle, which must be broken before any enemy could attempt the passage of the Balkans in this direction with safety.” In Roman times it was, as *Durostorum*, the headquarters of a legion, and one of the most important towns of Lower *Mœsia*. There are several records of its withstanding sieges and of its capture in the long past. In 1810 it was taken by the Russians and the fortifications destroyed, only to be rebuilt and attacked again by the same enemy nearly twenty years later, when it withstood for nine months a siege in which the assailants lost three thousand men. Again, in 1854, it stubbornly kept off the attack of the Russians under Gortschakoff, while, when it was invested during the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-8, it held out so stubbornly that it was not evacuated by the Turks until after the conclusion of peace. It used to be regarded as the strongest fortified town in Turkey, and its war record seems to bear out that reputation. After the war of 1828, Silistria was for some years in the hands of the Russians, as it was to be garrisoned by them until the

Turkish war indemnity was paid. It is said that the town and the surrounding country soon gave evidence of the superior industry of the Russian peasants, who were introduced and settled there during the period of occupation.

Shortly beyond Silistria the Danube leaves Bulgarian territory, after which Rumania is on both sides of the stream, for the land on the right, the Dobrudja, extending from the Danube to the Black Sea, was awarded to Rumania by the Treaty of Berlin. Both sides, too, become flat alike. The river is still greatly diversified by islands covered with bushes and reeds—"more resembling a sea studded with innumerable islets than a river"—while the avi-fauna is particularly rich, immense flocks of wild swans, wild geese, pelicans, herons, and other waterfowl being often seen. Miss Skene described how, in journeying up the river, the steamer in which she travelled was compelled to moor hereabouts at night, in a wilderness by no means devoid of beauty. "We lay under a wooded bank with many little fairy islands around us, all covered with green bushes, whose very wildness and want of cultivation were their principal charm . . . pelicans and storks stalking about on the lonely islands, uttering at times a wild cry, which more than anything I know brings most forcibly to the mind the images of solitude and desolation." Through scenery thus indicated, the river continues for many miles of the northerly course which it takes beyond Silistria.

About forty miles below that place a lengthy railway bridge—the only one below Belgrade—crosses the Danube, connecting Bukarest with the Black Sea port of Costantza (Kustendji), near to which place was Tomi, where Ovid spent his long years of exile. Before the bridge comes in sight an interesting relic of the Roman occupation is to be noted in the Wall of Trajan

—a double rampart of earth, which runs from near the village of Rasova to Kustendji. The railway bridge, which crosses the main stream of the Danube and the Borcea arm, is over two and a half miles in length, and one of the most remarkable examples of this kind of engineering ; it has sixty-eight spans, the longest of which—one of those over the main stream—is a cantilever over six hundred feet in length. When it is realized that the foundations of the piers are laid in water the mean depth of which is nearly a hundred feet at ordinary water level, and that the bridge is made at a height of more than one hundred and twenty feet at low water, to enable sailing ships to pass through unhindered, the boast that its completion is one of the greatest engineering feats of modern times will scarcely be regarded as an exaggeration. The bridge was completed and opened for traffic in 1895, having cost a sum of close upon a million and a half sterling.

The broad river flows on, past many islands, past occasional villages, for many miles, to Hersova, a small town on a height which, like so many of the places along the Lower Danube, suffered severely in the wars between Russia and Turkey. This has been described as “a species of oasis in the desert, prettily situated on an undulating eminence, with a fortified castle, and a large garrison ; its chief importance arising from the circumstance that it covers every point in this direction where an enemy might attempt to effect a landing in that rectangular peninsula called the Dobrudja.”* On the left bank just beyond—where the tributary Jalomitza flows in—is another landing-place, Gura-Jalomitza, near which a branch of the river goes off to the right, forming an extensive island or fen, which is described as a mass of reeds, and intersected by streams and channels,

* “The Danube and the Black Sea.” By Thomas Forester (1857).

radiating in every direction, and said to abound in wildfowl and herds of half-wild swine. Near the lower end of this island, there stands on the left bank the important town of Braila, the chief Rumanian port of entry, an important centre of the grain and timber trades, and a town with over fifty thousand inhabitants. Its chief interest is as a commercial and shipping centre, for it has nothing of architectural beauty to show, and its surroundings are flat and monotonous. Not far from Braila there are remains of a bridge, which tradition says was built across the Danube about five hundred years before the beginning of our era by Darius the Great. About ten miles below Braila, the larger port of Galatz is reached, a town situated between the confluence of the Sereth and of the Pruth, with the Danube, and where the great river makes its final bend eastwards to the Black Sea, still about ninety miles distant.

Galatz has extensive quays and a very large shipping trade, vessels of 2500 tons being able to come thus far up the river. It is a thriving and growing port, with a population not far short of a hundred thousand. The main part of the town is built on the rising ground that lies between the two tributaries named.

In St. Mary's church here is the tomb of the Cossack chief Mazeppa, immortalized in literature by Byron's narrative poem. Mazeppa was a member of a noble Polish family, who, being page at the Polish Court, intrigued with the wife of one of the nobles, was discovered, and by the irate husband was lashed naked to the back of a wild horse, which was then turned adrift—

“ I will not tire
 With long recital of the rest
 Since I became the Cossack's guest.
 They found me senseless on the plain,
 They bore me to the nearest hut,

They brought me into life again—
 Me—one day o'er their realm to reign !
 Thus the vain fool who sought to glut
 His rage, refining on my pain,
 Sent me forth to the wilderness,
 Bound, naked, bleeding, and alone,
 To pass the desert to a throne—
 What mortal his own doom may guess ? ”

Byron makes Mazeppa tell his story to King Charles XII. of Sweden after the close of “dread Pultowa’s day.” Mazeppa died of poison in the same year as the battle of Pultowa. Owing to his alliance with Charles his name was execrated in Russia, and he was hanged in effigy. His tomb in the Galatz church is believed to have been rifled during one of the Russian occupations.

Reaching its junction with the Pruth about ten miles below Galatz, the Danube passes from Rumanian territory on the left bank, and reaches Russian. Between the Pruth and the Black Sea is Bessarabia, which was detached from Rumania and ceded to Russia by the Treaty of Berlin, Rumania receiving by way of inadequate compensation the tract of Dobrudja already mentioned. From here the Danube runs east past the small Russian town of Reni and the Rumanian fishing village, formerly a Turkish fortress, of Isaccea, to the point where, near Tulcea on the Rumanian side, it branches at the beginning of the extensive delta. Primarily these branches are two—the St. George’s to the south-east and the Kilia to the north, which forms the Russian frontier. Each of these branches forks again, cutting the vast delta into a maze of reedy islands.

On the Kilia branch are the towns of Ismail and Kilia, which may be more particularly referred to before we follow the course taken by the river steamers to the Black Sea. Ismail is a fortress and river-port, with

upwards of thirty thousand inhabitants, and visited by over a thousand vessels each year.

“The fortress is called Ismail, and is placed
 Upon the Danube’s left branch and left bank,
 With buildings in the Oriental taste,
 But still a fortress of the foremost rank,
 Or was at least, unless ’tis since defaced,
 Which with your conquerors is a common prank :
 It stands some eighty versts from the high sea,
 And measures round of toises thousand three.”

Thus Byron described the place when narrating Don Juan’s experiences at the time that Ismail “was beleaguered both by land and water, by Souvarov,”

“the greatest chief
 That ever peopled hell with heroes slain,
 Or plunged a province or a realm in grief.”

The whole story of the siege—with many “asides”—is told in the seventh and eighth cantos of “Don Juan,” which tell of the hero’s exploits between his strange adventures on the Bosphorus and those in “the chief city of the immortal Peter’s polished boors.”

Kilia, the other Russian river-port, much nearer the mouths of this northern arm of the Danube, is a growing place; but the depth of water in the channel is not sufficient to make the Kilia branch of the river of great importance, although it is that by which the greatest volume of Danube water reaches the sea. Returning to the head of the delta, and following the main or southern branch, we have near its commencement the Rumanian town of Tulcea, another town of growing importance as a commercial and shipping centre, where the works of the European Danube Commission (the headquarters of which are at Sulina) are established. That Commission has made the Sulina channel, which branches to the left from the St. George’s arm, the chief navigation stream.

Sulina, a widespread low-lying town about the middle of the eastern side of the great delta, has grown from being a village of a few mud huts to a town of five thousand inhabitants since the improvements of the navigation under an International Commission were begun over half a century ago. The extent of those improvements may be gathered from a couple of passages written by British representatives on that Commission. Sir Charles Hartley, who was chief engineer to the Commission from 1856 to 1907, wrote some years later a description of the scene as it was when he began his labours in 1856 :

“The entrance to the Sulina branch was a wild, open seaboard, strewn with wrecks, the hulls and masts of which, sticking out of the submerged sandbanks, gave to mariners the only guide where the deepest channel was to be found. The depth of the channel varied from seven to eleven feet, and was rarely more than nine, feet.

“The site now occupied by wide quays extending several miles in length was then entirely covered with water when the sea rose a few inches above ordinary level, and that even in a perfect calm ; the banks of the river near the mouth were only indicated by clusters of wretched hovels built on piles and by narrow patches of sand skirted by tall reeds, the only vegetable product of the vast swamps beyond.

“For some years before the improvements, an average of two thousand vessels of an aggregate capacity of 400,000 tons visited the Danube, and of this number more than three-fourths landed either the whole or part of their cargoes from lighters in the Sulina roadstead, where, lying off a lee shore, they were frequently exposed to the greatest danger. Shipwrecks were of common occurrence, and occasionally the number of disasters was appalling. One dark winter night in

1855, during a terrific gale, twenty-four sailing ships and sixty lighters went ashore off the mouth and upwards of three hundred persons perished."

That indicates something of the old-time dangers of navigating the channels of the Danube delta. By the making of Sulina a safe port, the building of lighthouses, and the constant dredging and building up of the banks of the Sulina arm of the river, a wonderful change has been wrought, there being now a continuous channel at the entrance "twenty-four feet in depth, 5200 feet in length, and three hundred feet in width between the piers." The change, even within the first few years of the Commission's starting work, was remarkable; for while in 1855 out of 2928 vessels navigating the lower Danube thirty-six were wrecked, out of nearly the same number ten years later only seven were wrecked. Other changes may best be indicated in the words of Sir Henry Trotter, the present British representative on the Danube Commission :

"Freights from Galatz and Braila to North Sea ports have fallen from fifty shillings to about twelve shillings or even ten shillings per ton. Sailing ships of 200 tons register have given way to steamers up to 4000 tons register carrying a dead-weight of nearly 8000 tons; and good order has succeeded chaos. From 1847 to 1860 an average of 203 British ships entered the Danube, averaging 193 tons each; from 1861 to 1889, 486 ships averaging 796 tons; in 1893, 905 vessels of 1,287,765 tons, or 68 per cent. of the total traffic, and rather more than two and a half times the total amount of British tonnage visiting the Danube in the fourteen years between 1847 and 1860. The average amount of cereals (principally wheat) annually exported from the Danube during the period 1901-1905 was 13,000,000 quarters, *i.e.* about five times the average annual exportation during the period 1861-1867. It has been calculated

that between 1861 and 1902 the total tonnage of ships frequenting the Danube increased fivefold, while the mean size of individual ships increased tenfold." *

Sir Henry Trotter's authoritative account of the varying navigation of the Danube may conveniently be given here as, though this book is addressed to those who are likely to visit the river as travellers and pleasure-seekers, there may be some who are interested in such details. "The result of all the combined works for the rectification of the Danube is that from Sulina up to Braila the river is navigable for sea-going vessels up to 4000 tons register, from Braila to Turnu Severin it is open for sea-going vessels up to 600 tons, and for flat barges of from 1500 to 2000 tons capacity. From Turnu Severin to Orsova navigation is confined to river steamers, tugs and barges drawing six feet of water. Thence to Vienna the draught is limited to five feet, and from Vienna to Regensburg to a somewhat lower figure. Barges of 600 tons register can be towed from the lower Danube to Regensburg."

The international body known as the European Commission of the Danube, which has so splendidly justified itself, was called into existence by the Treaty of Paris of 1856, and may thus be regarded as one of the beneficent results of the Crimean War. The Commission was to consist of delegates, one from each country, representing Austria, France, Prussia, Russia, Sardinia and Turkey, their task being "to designate and cause to be executed the works necessary below Isaccea to clear the mouths of the Danube as well as the neighbouring parts of the sea, from the sands and other impediments which obstructed them, in order to put that part of the river and the said parts of the sea in the best possible state for navigation." Since the formation of the Commission its sphere of influence has been extended up

* "Encyclopædia Britannica," 11th Edition.

stream to Braila, and a Rumanian representative has been added to the body. The Commission was at first financed by loans, but by 1887 had cleared off all debts, and has now an average annual income of about £80,000 for carrying on its work.

Sulina is the termination of the Danube Steamship Company's service, which starts, as we saw, from distant Passau on the Austro-Bavarian frontier. Thanks in no small measure to the Danube Commission, which has its palatial offices and works here, the town has developed into a first-class port. The great delta on which it is situated (about a thousand square miles in extent) "mainly consists of one large marsh covered with reeds, and intersected by channels, relieved in places by isolated elevations covered with oak, beech and willows, many of them marking the ancient coastline."

Captain Spratt, R.N., in the course of a report on the mouths of the Danube more than half a century ago, drew attention to a curious periodical phenomenon, to which I have seen no reference by later writers, possibly the clearing of the channels by dredging has made it cease: "The river does not appear to be subject to very sudden or frequent floods; but about every five or seven years the whole delta becomes overflowed for a foot or more, generally in the month of May or June, by a progressive rising of the waters on the melting of the snow (called by the natives the *Plimera*), which obliges the inhabitants of Yuzlin and the lower hamlets to quit their cottages for a time, and retire to Besh-Tepch and Tulcha; but the Russian guard-houses are never deserted, the houses being more substantially built of wood, and raised about two feet above the ground."

So great is the deposit carried hither by the many mouths through which the great river discharges itself into the Black Sea, that one authority states that in thirty years the delta was extended in one part by as

much as two miles. Only about nine per cent. of the water is discharged by that which has now been made the main navigable channel, by far the greater portion—as much as sixty-seven per cent.—going by way of the Kilia mouths, where in ordinary flood times as much as three thousand cubic feet of mud and sand are poured into the sea per minute. Such is the volume and force of the water poured by the Danube into the Black Sea, that it is said to be “perceptible at the distance of fifty miles from its mouths.” Dr. Edward Daniel Clarke, in the voluminous account of his travels (1798–1802) recorded that “having passed the Isle of Serpents, we fell in with the current of the Danube. So great is the extent over which the waters diffuse themselves, from the shallowness of the sea, that, although the discharge is scarcely adequate to our notions of so considerable a river, the effect is visible for several leagues by the white colour communicated. Dipping buckets in the waves, we observed that the water was almost sweet at the distance of three leagues from the mouth of the river, and within one league it was perfectly fit for use on board. The shore is very flat all the way from Odessa to the Danube, and so low near the river’s mouth, that no other object appears to those who approach the shore than tall reeds rising out of the water, or the masts of vessels lying in the river.”

Dr. Clarke’s disappointment as to the “inadequate” mouth of the Danube suggests that he did not realize that the sea coast—“nowhere two feet above the sea”—of the delta between the Kilia and St. George’s mouths is over fifty miles in length. His reference to the Isle of Serpents suggests that, though more than twenty miles to the east of Sulina, the story of that island, the shores of which are reached by its waters, may fittingly form a termination to the story of the Danube.

The island is variously described (and in the same

work) as being "about one mile in circumference" and about one mile in length by half a mile in breadth "surrounded for the most part by precipitous cliffs, sixty to one hundred feet in height, with deep water near them." It is marked by a lighthouse, which was extinguished during the Crimean War, and the relighting of which bid fair for a time to lead to a renewal of hostilities after the treaty of peace had been signed. Apparently the ownership of Serpent Island was not specified in the treaty, for it is recorded that "with more than their usual promptness" the Turks sent a small detachment of soldiers to the island to relight the beacon. Shortly after, some Russians arrived with the same object, and, it was recorded shortly after the event, "Admiral Lord Lyons acts with decision, and prevents the Russians throwing in a reinforcement. Questions are raised by Russian chicanery on the operation of the Treaty with respect to the Isle of Serpents, and, a place almost as obscure, the town of Bolgrad on the new frontier. Insignificant in themselves, they are of paramount importance; the one as almost commanding the principal entrance of the Danube, the other its navigation. Russia persists in her claims. England, nearly deserted by her allies, resolutely demands their cession to Turkey in fulfilment of the Treaty. Her fleet reoccupies the Black Sea; she nails her ensign to the mast, and is prepared, single-handed, to carry her point. It is felt that she has the spirit and strength to do this; she alone has come out of the war with unimpaired resources—rather, she has only just gathered her strength. Russia recoils from a renewal of the contest and capitulates. Fido-Nisi (Serpent Island) and Bolgrad are the trophies of this bloodless triumph."

The tiny island that thus, for a time, threatened to bring about war, was anciently associated with one of the world's war heroes, for it was long known as Achilles'

Island, not only having on it a temple to that hero, but being popularly believed to be the very residence of the deified Achilles. It was also at one time known as Leuce, or the White Island, on account, it is supposed, of the multitudes of white seabirds that at certain seasons of the year more or less covered its surface; and it is further mentioned by ancient writers as "the bright island," and by Euripides as the White Shore of Achilles. Arrian, the pupil of Epictetus, wrote an account of a journey round the Euxine or Black Sea for the Emperor Hadrian, in the course of which he said: "Sailing out of that Ister [Danube] which is called Pylon, with the wind from the north, the Island of Achilles appears. . . . It is related that Thetis gave this island to Achilles, and that he still inhabits it. His temple and statue, both of very ancient workmanship, are seen there. No human being dwells there; it has only a few goats, which mariners convey as votive offerings. Other offerings or sacred gifts are suspended in honour of Achilles, such as vases, rings, and precious gems. Inscriptions are also read there in the Greek and Latin tongues, in different metres, in honour of Achilles, and Patroclus who also is there worshipped." The Greek historian goes on to refer to the "innumerable" seabirds that he saw on the island, adding, "these birds alone have the care of the shrine. Every morning they repair to the sea, and, dipping their wings in the waves, sprinkle the temple, and afterwards sweep with their plumage its sacred pavement."

"Seen from afar, fair Leuce rears her crest;
Leuce the white, where souls of heroes rest."

Seeing that the island was at one time regarded as the resort of the spirits of dead heroes, it might be explained by Pythagoreans that these spirits, in avine form, thus did honour to Achilles. Arrian continued,

“it is said, also, that Achilles has appeared, in time of sleep, both to those who have approached the coast of this island, and also to those who were sailing a short distance from it; instructing them where the island was safely accessible, and where the ships might best lie at anchor. They even say, further, that Achilles has appeared to them, not in time of sleep or in a dream, but in a visible form, on the mast or at the extremity of the yards, in the same manner as the Dioscuri; and that, although the latter appear, evidently and clearly, to persons who navigate the sea at large, and, when so seen, foretell a prosperous voyage, the figure of Achilles is seen only by such as approach the island.” The appearance of Achilles, was, there can be little doubt, that of St. Elmo’s Fires—a lambent electrical discharge at one time known as Castor and Pollux.

To turn from the record of an ancient traveller to that of a modern one, Dr. Clarke, whom I have already quoted, gives the following description: “At four o’clock in the morning we were called upon deck by the captain to see the Isle of Serpents, anciently Leuce, lying off the mouths of the Danube, celebrated in history for the tomb and temple of Achilles. It is so small that, as we passed, we could view its whole extent. Judging by the eye, it appeared to be near a mile in length and less than half a mile in breadth. It is quite bare, being only covered with a little grass and very low herbage. When carefully examined through a telescope, there did not seem to be the smallest remains of antiquity. I made a sketch of it from the south-east. On the south side appear cliffs about fifty feet high.

“Many absurd stories of Turkish and Russian mariners are founded upon a notion that the island is covered with serpents. An opportunity rarely occurs whereon ships can lie to in order to visit it; and, if this

were to happen, not a man of any of their crews would venture on shore, although there are twenty fathoms of water within a cable's length of the island, and any vessel may sail close to it. The Russians relate that four persons belonging to the crew of a ship wrecked there no sooner landed than they encountered a worse enemy than the sea, and were all devoured by serpents. Ammianus Marcellinus records a similar superstition as prevailing in his time concerning the dangers of the place."

Here we have an indication of the reason for the island's name; and though the legends of sailors being devoured by them are of course mere legends, the existence of the serpents seems beyond question. Captain Spratt, in his Admiralty survey of the mouths of the Danube, says "the modern name of Fido-nisi or Serpent Island, has no doubt arisen from the abundance of these reptiles upon the island; and they are still very numerous, being veritable sea-serpents, or water-snakes, living upon the fish in the sea, and inhabiting the cliffs on the coast. More than twenty of them were seen coiled together under a shelving rock that received the rays of a warm October sun; and many having fallen into the wells and cisterns died there: the water in them is not now drinkable, so that water for the Turkish troops is obliged to be brought from the Danube. The serpents are jet black, except along the belly. They have a small head, and are from four to five feet long, and, although said to be harmless, are a very disagreeable-looking species."

A traveller on the lower Danube has recorded the number of fresh-water snakes seen swimming along with their heads erect above the surface, and it may be that the reptiles of Serpent Island were (perhaps are, though I have found no recent reference to them) a colony of such that found the water about their island

still sufficiently fresh. The true sea snakes are described by writers on natural history as only found in Asiatic seas.

“ Adieu the woods and water’s side,
Imperial Danube’s rich domain !
Adieu the grotto wild and wide,
The rocks abrupt and grassy plain.”

Campbell



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